

COLLABORATE

www.proponent-group.com

Summit 2015: Great Topics, Excellent Speakers and Unparalleled Networking

This year's Summit is titled **Connecting with the Future of Teaching and Coaching** and the name reflects what we've done so well in past years. Members who have regularly attended our summits have been among the first to learn about the industry's move to a coaching model, AimPoint green reading, Golf Channel Academy turnkey marketing, the debut of various teaching technologies and many other industry-changing trends before anyone else knew about them.

This is a critical focus for Proponent Group. We keep you ahead of everyone else in the teaching business and we'll do it again this Fall at our eighth annual summit **November 1-3 (Sunday - Tuesday) at Las Colinas C.C., Irving, Texas.**

The full agenda will be available and registration will open on July 1st, but we can tell you about a few of the highlights to whet your appetite now.

The big new addition for 2015 – **"Building a Top-tier Teaching Career"** is our first ever special pre-summit session exclusively for our Associate Members from 2-5pm on Sunday afternoon before the full summit begins. This new session will feature a number of career building topics that will be extremely valuable to all of our younger members who are currently mapping out their career path. Among the featured speakers will be the authors of the hottest blog in golf instruction: The Curious Coaches themselves **Corey Lundberg** of The Club at Carlton Woods in Texas and **Matt Wilson** of La Rinconada C.C. in California.

Besides the new session, some of the topics at this year's Summit include:

- Learn the keys to creating a compensation package that is fair for both you and your facility.
- Secret Shopper Results: Our exclusive study shows the costly customer service mistakes that our members are making that can drive students elsewhere.
- Learn how *"Every Ball Counts"* is creating accountability for student practice.
- Discover how a few simple changes in how you manage your student database will grow your business.
- Learn new ways to create the ideal training environment for your students.
- And many more fresh ideas on this year's line up to be announced soon!



Curious Coaches: Matt Wilson (left) and Corey Lundberg

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PROPONENT GROUP NEWS

Fathers Day Gift Sales; Member Mentors Survey and New Discount Opportunity From Hertz

Member Mentors Survey: Popular Member to Member Assistance Gets it's Annual Update

From the very beginning, Proponent Group has been designed to harness the combined knowledge of our dedicated membership. We represent a gathering of the game's top instructors. We're able to circulate immense amounts of wisdom and knowledge throughout our small community. The information-sharing process serves to elevate all of our members' businesses, and Member Mentors, launched in mid-2013, is at the heart of that process.

The teaching professionals who have taken part in our Member Mentors program have volunteered their time to answer questions from fellow Proponent Group instructors. The expertise you can access covers dozens of topics. In some categories you'll find quite a few mentors, and if you have a question you may want to start by contacting someone geographically close to you or someone who is on a similar career track.

Any member who considers himself or herself to be among the top 20 percent of the membership in a specific issue/category, and would like to serve as a Member Mentor should complete the Member Mentors Survey which will be emailed to all full members this Thursday.

We say thank you to everyone in Proponent Group who has offered to be a Member Mentor. Your expertise is what makes Proponent Group possible.

Hertz Now Offering Proponent Group Member Discount

Thanks to our relationship with Golf Channel Academy, all Proponent Group members now can access a new auto rental discount program saving you up to an additional 15 percent by using our new Hertz Discount CDP code:



The electronic code for Golf Channel Academy and Proponent Group members is CDP# 2080332.

Wherever your travel takes you, close to home or around the world, your CDP number is the key to extra savings. Be sure to use this number whenever you book an auto rental from Hertz.

Using your discount is simple. Just go to www.hertz.com and while setting up your rental search, insert the CDP number. Note that through the end of 2015 you may also add seasonal offers including an extra 5 percent off with PC# 204676 and a free upgrade with PC# 193141.

Check out nine more ways your Proponent Group membership can save you hundreds and even thousands of dollars this year on page 11 of this newsletter.

Father's Day Offers Your Best Shot at Golf-related Gift Sales

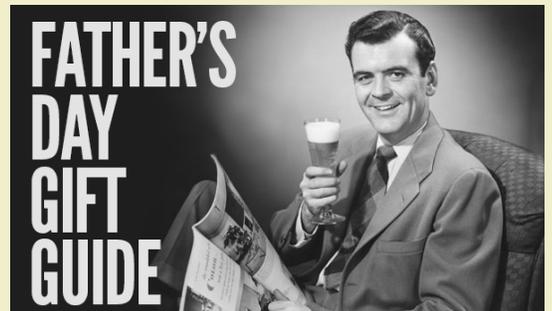
The number one golf gift buying event of the year is Father's Day. This is a great opportunity to market your services and products to your database or to an even wider audience through additional marketing tactics and advertising.

The obvious opportunity is selling gift certificates for your instruction programs. Provide a special Father's Day price to incentivize purchase as a gift. It's also a great time to be creating special promotions for books, videos or other media products that you have produced.

To maximize your Father's Day gift sales, make sure it is easy for wives and children to find out about your gift ideas. For example make sure you send your Father's Day gift ideas to all of your juniors and their parents.

Have fun with your promotions. Use headlines such as "No More Ties!" or "You Won't Need a Mulligan on this Gift."

Finally, don't wait to start promotions. Father's Day is less than three weeks away. Create your promotion



this week and send it as soon as possible with a follow up 7-10 days before Father's Day and a final reminder email on the Thursday before.



Summit 2015

Connecting with the Future of Teaching & Coaching

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

Full Agenda Available and Registration to Open on July 1st

Join us for our eighth year in a row showcasing what's coming next in golf instruction and highlighting fresh opportunities to grow your 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 student improvement
- Avoid costly customer service mistakes that drive students elsewhere
- Make new friends and expand your network of peers from across North America
- And MUCH more to be announced soon!

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



ENDORSEMENT DEALS

The Endorsement Game: A Few Ways to Play It

That company logo on your sleeve or hat can send positive signals about your skills and reputation. It might also lead to new opportunities and visibility.

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Golf is a brand-conscious, image-conscious corner of the world, known for its “pyramid of influence.” That’s the hierarchical structure we hear about often—it’s got a McIlroy or Woods at the top and Joe Golfer at the bottom. Somewhere in the upper half of the pyramid is the highly competent, in-demand but less-than-famous teaching professional. Between lessons and clinics and email sessions that pro might occasionally stop to ask, “Why don’t I have an endorsement deal for golf equipment or apparel?” He or she could further wonder if a non-golf deal might be possible for them.

These are by all means valid questions. Proponent Group member Brett Packee says the answer lies partly in the time demands of the core job, teaching and coaching. “It may require a professional in the deal-making world to make endorsements happen,” Packee says, referring to past efforts he’s made to negotiate with a local Acura dealer and a sporting goods store for endorsement income. Each offered promise but didn’t pan out for the Vernon Hills, Ill.-based coach.

“I’ve also tried to get ads and sponsorships on my website and on my V1 Branded Academy page, but without success so far,” says Packee. It’s not for lack of professional recognition, given Brett’s status as the only Illinois PGA member ever to win both Player of the Year and Teacher of the Year honors.

Trillium Sellers Rose, director of instruction at Woodmont Country Club in Rockville, Md., points to the obvious reason for pursuing various endorsement initiatives. “Teaching golf is not an occupation you make a fortune at,” she says. “As a respected golf instructor I feel I can bring some value to a brand. If, in return, there is added income that will bolster my baseline, that’s good all around, provided it’s the right sort of a brand.” Currently, her principal endorsement deal is a standard setup with Titleist involving merchandise only. “I’m a fan of their product and I relate well to the people at Titleist,” says Rose. “Through my TPI training, I became friends with Lance Gill and other people there. For me professionally Titleist has been a core relationship.”

Because it’s an agreement that involves no cash, Rose

isn’t tied exclusively to the brand. Therefore she can do some here-and-there branding work with other golf companies. “If I’m scheduled to do a Golf Channel appearance I can call Polo or Nike or Ecco and usually they’ll be glad to send me clothes and shoes,” she says. “Same thing if I’m set up to do a shoot with Golf Digest. For the apparel company, that can mean a full page showing their apparel and logo,” she says. “Those are good relationships for both sides.”

Of all brand names, Nike Golf may be the one that can

invest the most in getting its logo worn by influential golf instructors, for the simple reason that clubs, balls, apparel, shoes and everything else it sells in the

golf market comes under that one nameplate. Unlike Titleist with Foot-Joy and Scotty Cameron or TaylorMade with adi-

das, all of Nike’s presence in golf carries that one name plus the swoosh symbol. Cheryl Anderson has been a Nike Golf endorsee for a good portion of her professional career, benefiting in terms of gear, apparel and some bo-

nus money but perhaps all the more due to the contacts and peer relationships she has built.

“Being part of the Nike staff of instructors has had benefits beyond providing equipment and apparel,” says Anderson. “One of the most valuable parts of being on their staff has been the increased opportunities to meet with and trade ideas with the game’s top teachers like Pia Nilsson, Lynn Marriott, Chuck Cook and many others. Those opportunities have opened many doors for my career over the years.”

Bernie Najar has been around long enough to see the heyday of pro-staff agreements come and go. The director of instruction at Caves Valley Golf Club in Owings Mills, Md., prefers to build relationships with the smaller companies whose business is connected to the golf industry’s teaching-coaching niche. He has an agreement now with Swing Catalyst that originated in his long-held belief that the study of golf



ENDORSEMENT DEALS

improvement was ignoring the important interaction between the ground and the golfer's feet. "I bought one and became fairly knowledgeable in how to use it, and I gave some presentations on the subject," says Najar. "That has helped my visibility, including the chance to present at the PGA Teaching and Coaching Summit," he says. Now he is in talks with another company whose business relates closely to the ground-force dynamics that Swing Catalyst built its model around.

Jess Hansen, a Proponent Group member based in Blue Springs, Mo., has a new staff deal with Mizuno that covers personal-use clubs and golf bag in the first year then upgrades to gear plus apparel next season. Hansen reports that he has sold a dozen or more custom-fit Mizuno sets to his students in just a few months since signing on. Several years ago, he purchased a SAM (Science and Motion) PuttLab system and offered to serve part-time on the sales force. "They send the leads to me and I pick things up from there," says Hansen. "I've sold 10 or more systems in three years, which is very satisfying. The commission schedule is generous and this is something that's strategically on the mark for my core business."

In the 2015 Proponent Group Compensation Survey, there was a chunk of valuable baseline data on endorsement benefits enjoyed by members. To the question, "How many endorsement contracts do you currently have?" 36 percent said they currently had none. Of the teaching professionals who didn't give the goose-egg answer, 52 percent said they had one endorsement agreement. Most of the remaining coaches reported having two or more endorsement deals.

What was the merchandise value of those agreements? The most common figure given for "cash-equivalent" value was \$3,000 and the median dollar figure was \$2,500. Actual dollars, it goes without saying, don't exactly get thrown at golf coaches by the brands they have deals with. That said, of the Proponent members who said yes to the endorsement question, there were indeed about a quarter of them who said cash was part of the arrangement. Most cited a figure from \$2,000 to \$5,000 annually, while a few gave smaller numbers, down to \$500. On the high side, a half-dozen disclosed higher amounts, including three who were receiving \$20,000-something in cash payments.

Generally speaking, the Proponent member who is in full-time employment at a golf facility is working for a private club. That describes Mike Carbray, who can be found daily during the golf season at Butterfield Country Club in Oak Brook, Ill., a Chicago suburb. Recently Carbray made a trip to the site of the

2017 U.S. Open, Erin Hills in Wisconsin, as part of his endorsement deal with Cleveland Srixon. He is paid commission—a percentage of dollar sales—on the business he does with the brand at Oak Brook, as well as at his winter indoor academy. "They were hosting some big-box customers at Erin Hills and they wanted me there to play golf and socialize," says Carbray, a longtime Proponent Group member who moved strongly into teaching after starting in the golf-operations track.

He values the relationship highly due to the ease of his personal interactions with top-ranking Cleveland Srixon executives. "If I do a custom fitting for one of my students and there is a back-order on the components, I can make a phone call to a vice president there and have the clubs built the next day," says Carbray. "That means more to me than going to another company that might pay me \$5,000 a year straight out but I wouldn't have any close personal relationships established." The private-club setting makes logos and brand relationships less important as a credibility-builder in his view. "Early in my career I thought about it a lot," Carbray says. "At a club, word-of-mouth travels fast and it's not as important as it would be at a daily-fee or an academy range."

Brett Packee makes an effort to grasp the question from the perspective of a golf equipment manufacturer, philosophizing that "a golf company is not going to just hand you money if you are not making sales for them." The exception, to hark back to that pyramid of influence, would be a teaching professional with exceptionally high visibility. "It's hard to say what my true worth is to a golf company," Packee muses. "The fact that I have my name on a Mizuno bag 40 hours a week on a public range creates brand awareness," Packee says, "but companies are going to want to see sales, not awareness."

A factor to consider in this regard is the newer company

with impressive products that has almost no awareness and could gain a foothold by partnering with top teachers. At one point Mizuno probably did fit this description. Under its now-shuttered Ambassador program, Packee got a \$500 cash bonus for winning Teacher of the Year, and there were other considerations that paid off for the professionals with that status.

It all comes back to market influence, based on a professional's visibility and reputation. When some potential partner is thinking about having that professional represent, endorse or even sell a product or service, it has to make sense strategically and it has to support the core business. If you can check off those boxes, you're on the right track to something of value.

THE UPSHOT

- Any professional with a following has a right to ask: "What golfers do I influence? And what brands or companies could benefit from that influence?"
- The benefits of endorsement deals are credibility, visibility, professional contacts, comp merchandise and cash stipends, in that order.
- Partnering with a company inside or outside the golf industry can't eat up too much of your time and it has to fit with your goals and career aspirations.

Results-Oriented Marketing Driving New Business

By Ian James, CEO,
Retail Tribe

Often, for a presenter or commentator, it's easy to survey the marketplace and notice the mistakes and missed opportunities. I'm not sure why that is, although I suspect it's our human nature to be critical. Given all that, I feel especially thrilled as I write this month's article to be recognizing two Proponent instructors and the good they're accomplishing.



Great PR for a Savvy Golf Coach

Let me start with Scott Hogan. The first article written by Scott that I had a chance to read did not mention his system or much about a process. His story focused on a relatively experienced golfer who had managed to lower his average score by 10 strokes, from the low 90s to the low 80s. All that in just a few months.

Why did I love this written account so much?

- First, it's a story that's especially relevant to the largest group of golfers: middle-aged, male, seemingly peaked and shooting in the 90s.
- Second, the story contains a clear result. The golfer has gone from low 90s to low 80s in just a few months.
- Finally, the story isn't about Scott. It's all about the golfer. Written that way, it allows the reader to replace the golfer with themselves in the story.

While there isn't a specific product being trumpeted in the article, Scott has presented the largest market group of golfers with a pathway to better golf.

Engage with Scott and, for the regular golfer, there's the promise of more fairways hit, more approach shots attacking pins and more pars and birdies.

Most instructors do a great job of bringing learners into the game and many do an even better job of providing one-on-one coaching with elite players. But the research indicates that we get a



Data collection and analysis shows that golfers who take instruction add significantly to the facility bottom line.

very low percentage of the average-golfer population into coaching programs.

Scott's PR effort, which I hope he continues via more such stories, will appeal to those golfers. That PR, along with offers these players will understand, should bring more of these regular golfers into coaching programs. That's great for golf in so many ways.

You Create More Rounds and Revenue

Your own Proponent Group research tells us that F&B and shop revenue for golf clubs is increased if a golfer is engaged in coaching. Our research, here in the United States, also indicates that rounds played increases in the following 12 months. And perhaps most significantly for an industry with a very "leaky bucket," 100 percent (statistically) of members engaged in coaching programs renew their membership the following year.

So, the success that Scott's having with the particular golfer referenced in his story means yet another golfer who will stay with the game, play more golf and spend more on the game.

Scott Hogan is helping to provide a very visible pathway from the point where a golfer has completed his or her introductory coaching phases and gained a level of skill that enables them to scuffle through 18 holes, to a point where they're actually quite good at the game and can even become competitive. Again, that's great for our industry.

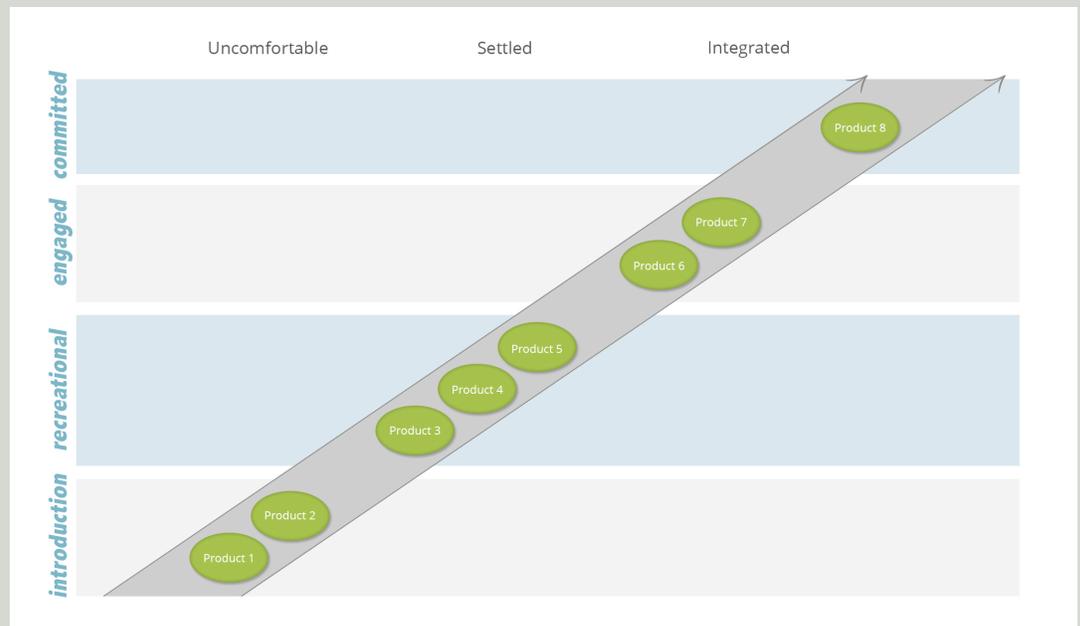
RETAIL TRIBE ON MARKETING

Create Products These Golfers will Respond To

There's a tremendous untapped opportunity to design and create specific products that appeal directly to recreational and engaged golfers. Remember, this makes up the vast majority of the 25 million people playing the game in the United States.

While we have very self-explanatory coaching products like "Get Golf Ready", or whatever you call your introductory programs for those being exposed to the game, we turn very vague pretty quickly after that.

Most coaches seem to think



The pathway a golfer needs to see as they move up the ladder of competence.

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 worth 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.

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 Kaster

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.

RETAIL TRIBE ON MARKETING

“lesson packages” or “season coaching retainers” will do for the golfers that continue upward from the basic recreational level.

Look at the pathway illustration on page 7, and spend some time thinking about programs that would take golfers up the ladder of competence until they’re accomplished and ready to tackle the double black diamond: 18-hole stroke play from the back tees.

As Well as Products, You Need Events for Golfers

While you’re thinking about coaching products for this group, spend some time thinking about events that will also help keep them connected to the game, the club, and of course, to you.

PGA Professionals do a great job of creating new golfers, but research also indicates that far less than 50 percent of those learners ever make it to the point where they become activated and retained golfers.

A very good golf coach in Dallas did his own research and found that over 90 percent of the women who graduated from his ‘Get Golf Ready’ programs were never going on to become even recreational golfers. He questioned those who graduated from his programs but declined to take up the game, and found that the jump from the coaching tee to the first tee was too great. His students found the so-called real game of golf too difficult.



Dee Forsberg

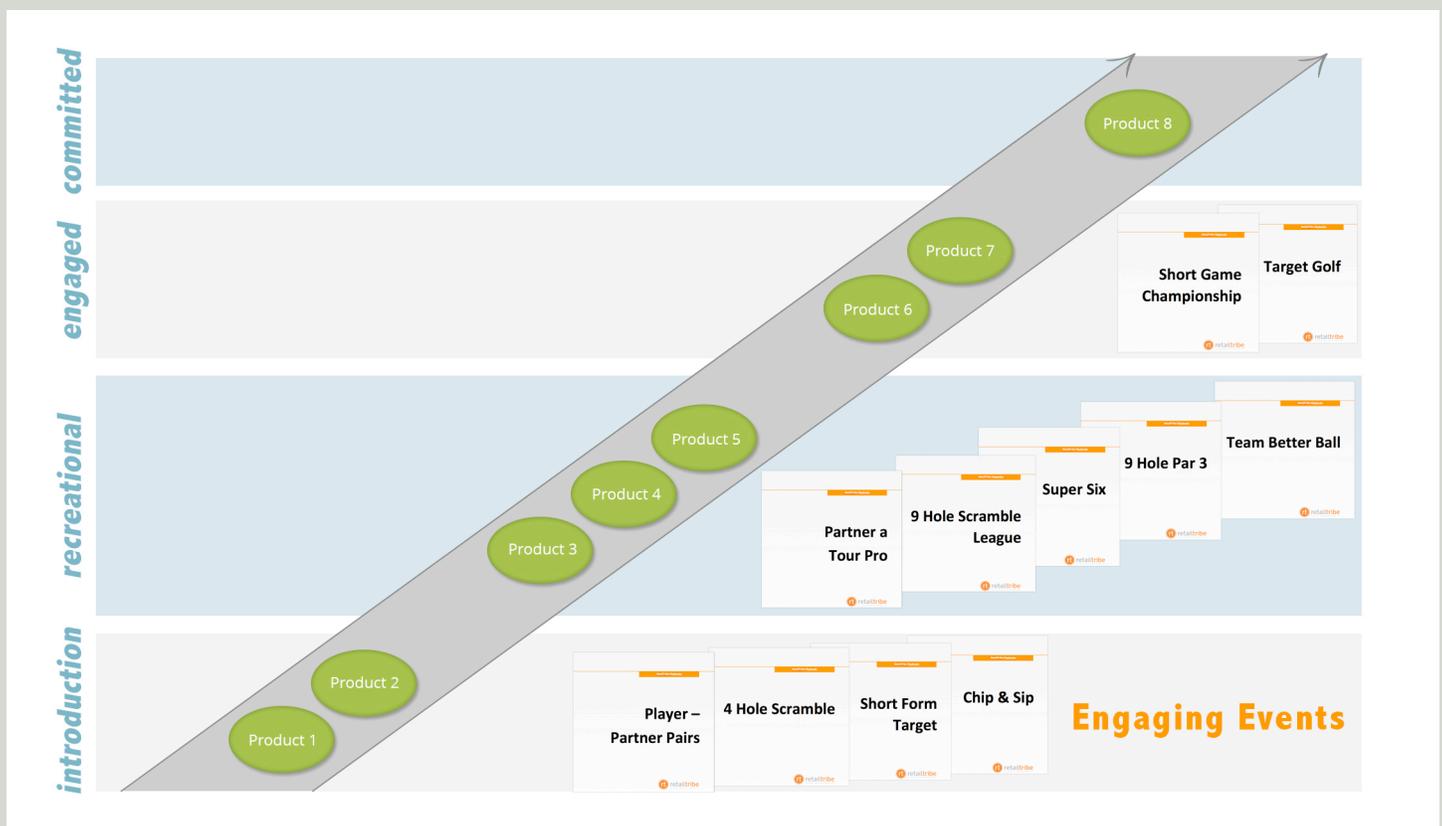
Dee Forsberg, my second shout-out in this article, creates games that learners can enjoy. They might not be playing 18-hole stroke play from the back tees, but they’re having fun taking on a challenge they can handle.

The golf industry needs to get its mind around this concept, and take a cue from professionals like Dee. Why should a golfer wait until they can hit a

5-iron 180 yards, high and straight, before they enjoy themselves? If you want to keep golfers engaged with the game and therefore more likely to invest in improvement, make sure there are events that match their competence and thus will prove enjoyable to them.

Some golfers may never migrate to wanting to play 18 holes of stroke play. They’re still golfers. They still want to enjoy golf. Great job, Dee.

Neil Lockie, who is director of golf at Jonathan’s Landing, discovered the huge interest in playing golf that a new beginner can realize when he took a group of girls out on the course and played a 4-hole, 5-person scramble with them, while also providing coaching. The girls had such fun that within a few weeks Neil had 25 girls booked and had to schedule four of his assistants to assist in managing the event. Once again, programming drives profits.



It is critically important to create engaging events for every level of golfer. Too many lesson takers drop out when forced into difficult formats too early.

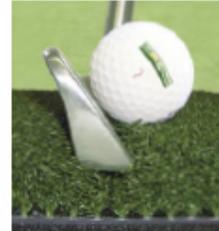
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- "True feel with true results ..." Mike Bender – Top 5 Teacher / Top 25 Golf School
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Proponent Group "Help Me Help You" Specials ... if you help me with pictures and a review that I may use in my marketing – I will offer you a special deal. (*limit One Mat Only)

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STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

What Makes for a Really Good Business Logo?



Working with the team at Golf Channel over this past year preparing for the launch of Golf Channel Academy has been a constant reminder that “the devil is in the details.” One great example of the myriad details that will affect your personal teaching brand is the development of your business logo.

Most of our members have a logo that graphically represents what their teaching brand stands for. However, many others are due for a freshening or a redesign of their logos. This fact came clear during my review of instructor logos for Golf Channel Academy. My own ability to assess a logo has been improved through time spent with the person who managed the redesign of Golf Channel’s logo last year. It was fascinating to see all the issues that were considered during the process of changing from the old blue circle “G” to the new peacock-adorned “GOLF”.

For example, Golf Channel knew the new logo would be seen in countries around the world so they had to check to see if there were languages around the world where the letters “G-O-L-F” could create any unintended meanings.

They also gathered the logos of every competing sports network to avoid creating something too similar. Golf Channel also reviewed the logos of all the major golf publications and golf manufacturers—again, to avoid duplication or confusion with their new logo.

Another factor was where it would be used: On screen, in print, apparel, animations and many other applications.

After eight-plus months, more than 100 trials and the creation of a custom font the new Golf Channel logo was finished. Now, nobody expects you to spend upwards of a year to cre-

ate your logo, but this story represents the care you should take in making sure your logo represents you well in the ways you intend it to. A few key points to keep in mind:

- Logos can become dated after just a few golf seasons. You should freshen your logo every five to seven years.
- In choosing graphics, simpler is usually better. Complex designs are bad for instructors because they reproduce poorly on golf apparel.
- Consider your color scheme carefully. Golf logos are often shown with grass and tree backgrounds so avoid using green in your logo’s main color palette.
- Make sure you get a high-resolution version of your logo design files, including an EPS version, and then store your logo files in a safe, easy-to-locate place. You’d be amazed how many of our members don’t have access to a high-quality version of their own logo when they need it!

Logo designs don’t have to be a huge expense considering their importance to your business. The designers we recommend can do a very professional logo design in the \$500 to \$1,000 range complete with all the high-res files you will need.

The Proponent member website includes a Logo Design Guide for Golf Instructors that you can download at any time from the Business Guides section. It even includes a gallery of more than 100 of your fellow members’ logos as examples of what is in the marketplace now.

In our Proponent Preferred section of the website we also list a Graphic Designer who can assist you in creating a new logo of your own if you are in the market for a new one. A logo is often the most personal and most recognizable part of your brand, so it’s worth the trouble to spend some time fine-tuning it, meanwhile avoiding the common trip-ups that instructors make when creating these images for their businesses.

Proponent Group Partners



EXCLUSIVE MEMBER DISCOUNTS

Save Thou\$ands on Your Business Expenses

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Proponent Group's membership of industry-leading professionals is highly attractive to vendors and service companies. For that reason, a wide array of special discounts and terms are made available to you. Information on how to obtain each discount is included below and is also found under Exclusive Discounts on the members website. If you have questions, or experience any difficulty in accessing these discounts, don't hesitate to contact Proponent Group at 407-878-1235.

Travel Savings from American Express Travelink

Our agreement with American Express Travelink provides you with a higher level of service while saving you money on travel expenses. Travelink service provides our members with the highest level of travel booking assistance along with best-in-class air, car and hotel rates.

Contact John Higgins at Travelink at 615-277-5174 or email him at john.higgins@travelink.com to set up your account and to ask any questions you may have about the program. Additional details about how you may access the Travelink services and applicable rates are found here.

Credit Card Processing from CardConnect

Proponent Group's preferred vendor Niles Crum, of Card Connect, has reduced the cost



for every Proponent Group member whose merchant account he has reviewed—that's a 100 percent "hit rate." Moreover, to support your career, Card Connect allocates to Proponent Group a percentage of the profit earned on each member account for as long as members use the Card Connect service. This is a win for you and Proponent Group.

Web Design and Hosting from Imavex

Working with Imavex, Proponent Group members receive large discounts on website build-out, monthly pricing and email marketing. Standard pricing: \$4,999 for website build-out and \$199



monthly pricing. Proponent Group Pricing: \$2,250 for website build-out and \$119 monthly pricing. Email Marketing prices are based on the number of addresses you have in your database. For example, for Proponent Group Members sending emails to 1-500 addresses, the monthly cost is \$5 and there is no limit on how many emails you may send. Contact Zach Miller at [imavex.com](mailto:zach@imavex.com) for more details at zach@imavex.com.

International Clubmakers Guild Membership Deal

ICG is offering a special to Proponent Group members through the end of 2015. Buy a one-year membership for \$100; receive a second year at no charge. Please email directors@clubfittersguild.org or go to their website www.clubfittersguild.org for more information.

Statistical Analysis from ShotByShot.com

Proponent Group members who sign up for a 30-Player Group (or sign up more than 30 players) receive a discount equal to getting their 12th monthly payment free. For those who pay monthly, the savings will be spread out over the year. In addition, you will get access to their new Player Ranking Report at no additional cost. For any questions regarding these benefits, contact Peter Sanders at 203-968-1608 or email him at psanders@shotbyshot.com.



Apparel from Summit Golf Brands including EP Pro, Fairway & Greene and Zero Restriction

All current products from ALL three outstanding lines are available to Proponent Group Members at the following preferred pricing: Without brand logo: 30% off wholesale pricing. With brand logo: 50% off wholesale pricing. To place an order: Go to the brand-specific website pages exclusively for Proponent Group members: <http://pg.fairwayandgreene.com>, <http://pg.eppro.com> or <http://pg.zerorestriction.com>. For questions regarding your order, contact Customer Service at 855-924-2228.



Eyewear from Sundog

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Swing Analysis Data from Swingbyte

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What I've Learned: Fred Griffin

Grand Cypress Academy of Golf, Orlando, FL

Interview by Paul Ramee, Jr.



Its prime location and long years of success have made the Academy of Golf at Grand Cypress a pilgrimage site for people who are passionate about golf performance. The Academy's director, Fred Griffin, is the face of the place. He has overseen the academy operation since it opened back in 1986.

Recognized by GOLF Magazine as one of the Top 100 Teachers in America, Fred is responsible for developing and honing all of Grand Cypress Academy's instructional programs. A first-class teacher and administrator, Fred was honored as a Lead Coach within the new Golf Channel Academy system and has been honored as Teacher of the Year for the North Florida section of the PGA.

When he spoke with Paul Ramee to look back at several decades of high achievement, there was plenty of insight and story-telling to share, as this transcript readily reveals.

Fred, please describe your background in brief and how you became a golf professional.

I grew up in Cedartown, Ga, which also happens to be the hometown of Doug Sanders. There were a few of us who grew up in Cedartown and would go on to become PGA professionals. Besides me there was Bucky Ayers, Joe Guillebeau, Van Tanner and Bill Robinson. At Cedar Valley and later Cherokee CC where we played as juniors there was no range or pro to teach us, so we learned from the better players. When I turned professional I went to work for Mark Darnell at West Lake CC in Augusta, Ga and then for Bucky Ayers at the Hills of Lakeway in Austin, Tex., which at that time was in the process of opening a golf academy. Chuck Cook was hired as director of the academy. I volunteered my time to help Chuck get started and eventually split my work week between the golf shop and the golf academy. When the academy opened, Chuck asked me to be part of it. That was an extremely valuable experience for me. I would be able to see and work with teachers like Paul Runyan, Phil Rodgers and Davis Love, Jr.

At that particular point in time, some new innovations were making their way into golf instruction. Tell us how the Lakeway crew took things to a new level.

Sometime late in 1985, Chuck Cook and Phil Rodgers had the idea to franchise the academy. They created a concept and asked for involvement from Jack Nicklaus and his company, who of course had worked with Phil on his short game for some time. Jack gave them a green light and a plan was formed to set up five separate locations. Each of the owners of these five proposed franchises visited the academy for a two-day meeting with Chuck, Phil and me. Afterward, I started by visiting one of the locations in Traverse City, Michigan before returning to Austin. Soon after that time, I met with the team at Grand Cypress and was offered the job at the new facility in Orlando.

And now 30 years have passed. How have you been able to keep your program fresh all that time?

One factor is that Grand Cypress Resort has been very supportive when it comes to capital improvements for the academy. We have a five-year plan that is submitted to management for technology and improvements to keep us at the forefront of the industry. Our teaching staff, many whom have been with us for over twenty years, are excellent communicators and help develop creative programs for our students. We keep up with the latest trends through the Proponent Group, PGA of America and the Internet.

Grand Cypress Academy has been associated for decades with Dr. Ralph Mann. Can you talk about his contribution?

It's been important, and we continue to offer science-based research through the efforts of Dr. Mann, who has tirelessly researched every part of this game. We teach those fundamentals, with a long record of success. I thought it would be unique to offer a curriculum where every aspect taught in our programs was based on science and not opinion. I was introduced to Dr. Mann in Texas when Chuck hired him to do a swing analysis for a golf school. Dr. Mann started doing golf research at the request of Jim Suttie. He had been working with Olympic runners at the time, having been an Olympic hurdler himself.

How far does the scientific approach extend, within your academy program?

With the help of Dr. Mann we do research on all aspects of the full swing and short game. We have extended into clubs and balls. To give you an example, we test every club head on the market, every year. We know the ones that have a low or high launch, and so forth. We do the same with shafts and balls. We can then accurately match equipment to our players.

Has technology expedited the time frame for you to complete your research?

It is definitely easier with 3D. What used to take all day to complete research on one swing can now be completed in a much shorter time frame.

Over this long span of time, what changes have you seen to the golf school market and golf academy market in your part of the world?

From 1986 to 2000 it grew at an amazing rate. One of my sales managers mentioned to me that it didn't require much selling as he was simply taking orders. When we opened at Grand Cypress in 1986 there weren't but a few golf schools available so the competition was limited. But as more schools opened in Florida and around other parts of the country many more options became available.

And nowadays?

Recently, it has become even more competitive. Many of the private clubs around the country are making a commitment to instruction and members can stay at home and receive a very good experience.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

What have you learned from working with Tour Players over the years? Any favorite stories about the pros who have trained at Grand Cypress?

The ones who are good are very goal-oriented. They work hard and work smart and they are not afraid to work on their weaknesses. Greg Norman practiced at the facility from 1985-1988. He enjoyed working on his swing using the computer model system. Greg was really good to the staff and hosted a cookout for everybody one evening. I also remember one time when we had him on the system and we were doing work on long hitters. Dr. Mann asked him to hit one as far as he could. I will never forget that swing. At impact not one part of Greg's body was touching the ground. He had completely lost contact with the ground.

Any other tour-player recollections along these lines?

We had Bernard Langer come over during Bay Hill to get compared to the model. We put him on and saw that he was slightly over the top and his grip was a bit strong. We talked to him about that and Bernard said no, he was not changing his grip. A month later when the Masters came around I went up to Augusta and spoke to his teacher, who mentioned that Bernard was starting to make some of the changes we had recommended.

Seve Ballesteros had taken his family to Disney for some vacation time and he made a visit to our academy to check his swing. Actually he came by for three days in a row. We put him on the model and found that his upper body was tilted back one foot behind the model at impact. Just by showing him that contrast, it was as though we had given him a challenge. By day three of his visit he was almost spot-on with the model. Toward the end of his last day here he walked over to a practice bunker where one of my staff instructors was practicing sand shots. He got into the bunker and bet the young man that he could beat him with his 3-iron, which he proceeded to do.

Your facility is one of the best anywhere to practice at. What would you say are the essentials for creating a great practice environment?

Being creative and having very good wedge areas. You need to create an environment that motivates people to practice. We bought a Flight-



Griffin was named one of GOLF Magazine's Top 50 Teachers in America when they published their first list in 1991

Scope XI and an iPad Mini and we rent it to our members to use when they practice. We had a seminar for those interested and we set up combines for them to use when they practice. Another small tweak we made recently involves the main landing area. We had our superintendent mow a fairway into the middle of the range so people could practice their driver shots more effectively. Last and not least, we are serious about teaching people how to practice, as part of our golf schools.

You taught with Phil Rodgers for many years, can you share some of your favorite Phil stories.

I really do not know where to start. Obviously, Phil was known for his skills in teaching the short game. However, he was really exceptional at analyzing a full golf swing and he was very good at getting a person to do what he wanted them to do in the golf swing. He was very good at fixing the ball flight. Phil would never let someone off the

Another great quote I always share is: "The mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains, the superior teacher demonstrates, the great teacher inspires." -Fred Griffin



WHAT I'VE LEARNED

hook until they did what he was asking, and he always did it in a very caring way. Once the change was made, he was that student's biggest cheerleader. When he showed enthusiasm to one student the other students all became more motivated. I played a late nine with him at The Hills, he missed all nine greens and shot one under. He got it up and down eight times and chipped in once. He had an engineering mind and he loved the Model Golf Swing machine. But he and Ralph wouldn't always agree and when the debate started I would be sitting there as the benefactor of these two great minds going back and forth. Phil was also a great club designer and an even better clubfitter. Almost every student bought clubs when they went through a fitting with Phil. He deeply understood the mechanics of fitting.



Griffin has been the only Director of Instruction since Grand Cypress' academy opened nearly 30 years ago.

On that same subject, what is the role of clubfitting in your teaching and how has it changed over the years?

With the current USGA rulings on Conforming Clubs and Balls, a key is understanding how the clubhead and ball perform and how the right combination will help the student. The shaft is the outlier and with so many options it can be mind boggling. That is one of the reasons we do our research. The ball and clubhead are easy. You need to identify what the shaft does then you can optimize it. You have to know how it launches the ball and what kind of spin it imparts.

Any advice from Fred Griffin to young, up-and-coming instructors?

I'll start by saying you should be very motivated and embrace technology. Do that and the older guys will come to you for advice. One great quote I always remember relates to progress: "If you can't measure what you're doing, you will lose interest in it." So, create a program to improve for your students, then be sure to measure and catalogue their improvement. Sit down with them

and show them that indeed they are making progress. Also, read everything you can, watch others teach, get better at it by doing it. Always remember, if you get your students to play better, they will keep coming back. Another great quote I always share is this: "The mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains, the superior teacher demonstrates, the great teacher inspires." Phil Rodgers and Butch Harmon inspired their players. To this day, Butch gets a lot of people to the top of their game.

Read any good books lately?

"Every Shot Counts" is a book I continue to go back to often. Mark Sweeney and his AimPoint information is phenomenal. Mark was a member of our Academy and was taking a putting lesson before he came up with his AimPoint program. One of our instructors mentioned to him that green reading "is an art" and required experience. He didn't like that answer and went out and developed AimPoint. I also read a lot of info by Dr. Bob Rotella, Dr. Dick Coop and Dr. Ryan Caserta and his visual training. Between Ryan, Mark Sweeney, Dr. Mann and the SAM Putt Lab, my own putting has really improved, I can tell you that.

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

MEMBER MILESTONES

Please Welcome Proponent Group's New Members for May 2015

Mark J. Caldwell, Mark J. Caldwell PGA Golf Academy@Canyon Springs Golf Club, San Antonio, TX - Full member.

Cameron Morton, Lake Valley Golf Club, Boulder, CO - Associate member.

Zachary Turek, Shannopin Country Club, MoonTownship, PA - Associate member.

Bo Watson, Rick Murphy Golf Academy, Greensboro, NC - Associate Member

Past Due Membership Fees Policy

We'd like to thank the vast majority of our members who have been fantastic about keeping your credit card on file up to date or quickly responding when we request help updating an expired or declined card. This cooperation has allowed us to keep our operating costs in check for the past eight years without ever raising our annual dues for full members.

However, it is taking more of our staff's time to track down delinquent renewals so we wanted to clarify that all accounts that become more than 60 days past due for a renewal will be moved to inactive status and access to Proponent Group benefits and events will be suspended until the renewal is paid. Thank you for your prompt assistance when your renewal comes due.

If you are having cash flow issues due to seasonality of your teaching position, contact us about switching to our monthly recurring payment option so you never have to pay your entire renewal at one time again.

If you have any questions about your account, contact Lori Bombka at lbombka@proponent-group.com or call her at 407-484-8951.

Proponent Group Adds American Express Travelink Service to Member Benefits

Proponent Group is pleased to offer a new member



benefit and discount program that will provide you with a higher level of service and save you money on your travel expenses. We've partnered up with American Business Travel's Travelink service to provide our members with the highest level of travel booking assistance along with best-in-class air, car and hotel rates.

By direct phone or email, you will have access to Proponent Group's designated travel advisors to make your reservations. Travelink has great flexibility and can also assist you in setting up group travel when you take students on golf trips. You will have access to all airlines, hotels and rental car companies (including Southwest Airlines).

By accessing business travel pricing through American Express, you will have access to exclusive offers. Your most significant savings through this program will be for hotel, car rental and international air reservations.

All travel can be reserved and paid for with the credit card of your choice (it does not have to be an American Express card) and you will continue to earn your preferred mileage program credits as you do now.

Travelink charges \$10 for each booking for a hotel and/or auto rental and \$25 for each flight reservation. When booking a flight there is no additional fee for adding a hotel and/or auto rental reservation to the trip.

Proponent Group also earns travel credits from Travelink based on the volume of our members' bookings. These credits will lower company costs for future education events, which in turn benefits the membership.

Contact **John Higgins** at Travelink at **615-277-5174** or email him at **john.higgins@travelink.com** to set up your account and to ask any questions you may have about the program.

For complete details on using the Travelink program you also may visit the Member Discounts page on the members' only website.

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