

COLLABORATE

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Wide-Ranging and Timely, Summit Presentations Show the Path Forward

At last week's eighth annual gathering of Proponent Group, information flowed freely and the mood was high-energy from start to finish. Encamped at Las Colinas Country Club outside Dallas for three days, with an agenda devoted to teaching, coaching and business-building, about 140 attendees, presenters and sponsors explored the current state of coaching and took a glimpse at its bright future.

To get things started, Proponent's president (and summit emcee) **Lorin Anderson** spoke briefly on "Five Trends in Instruction Right Now." Lorin's cluster of current trends went as follows:

- Technology is turning teaching into an "arms race," resulting in a split between "haves and have-nots"
- Online communication means "the lesson never ends," as coaches spend evenings in reinforcement and follow-up messaging
- There's a growing socialization of practice and improvement, in which golfers gather for swing-sharpening the same way they attend book-club meetings—or perhaps they start out as super-social Topgolfers then seek green-grass versions of the golf experience
- There are fewer "lessons" and there's more "training," as the motor-skill acquisition process becomes better understood
- Compensation of the coach/teacher is becoming more closely matched with measurable outcomes and outputs, be they performance-based (lower scores) or business-based (more rounds, more members, more club revenue).

An example of that fewer lessons/more training phenomenon was seen in the impressive first-day presentation titled "Every Ball Counts," led by **Darren May** and **Bill Davis**. In a rare indoor-outdoor split presentation, the pair dove deep into both the



Darren May discusses the next frontier in golf training

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PROONENT GROUP NEWS

Teaching Buildings Gallery Upgrade; Golf Channel Academy Update and 2016 Summit to Scottsdale

2016 Summit Returns to Talking Stick

We are very pleased to announce a full year in advance that we will continue our summit venue rotation among East, Central and Western locations by making a return to the outstanding Talking Stick Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona on **October 23-25, 2016** (Sunday-Tuesday). We're already working on a few new twists to our annual format and we know you'll want to be part of the 2016 edition. So please put the dates on your calendar now and we'll start to fill in the agenda and other details in the early Spring next year.



Photos Continue to be Added to Our Unique Teaching Buildings Gallery

Thanks to photos donated from dozens of our members, industry insiders and our partner companies who supply technologies used in many teaching buildings, we are very fortunate to continue to expand our gallery of more than 400 teaching building photos.



The gallery includes both exterior and interior shots of more than 50 buildings. Building styles range from utilitarian to highly detailed architectural designs.

To view the gallery, go Teaching Buildings Survey and Guide under Business Guides in the members' website.

Golf Channel Academy Nearing 75 Locations After First Year

It's been one year since Proponent Group announced we would be merging with the company that runs Golf Channel Academy (GCA), a co-branded marketing opportunity for top tier golf academies and coaches across North America.

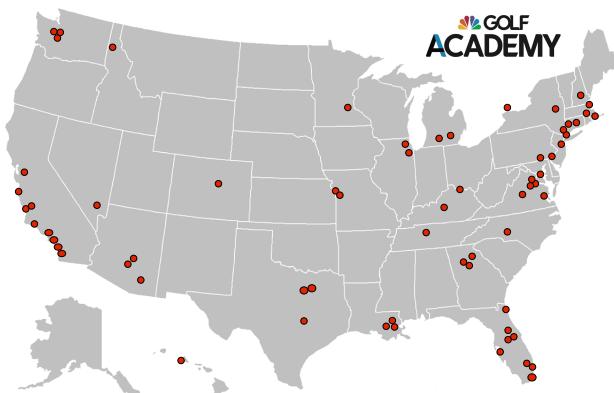
On the first anniversary, the update on just how things are progressing is very positive. Over the past 20 months GCA has signed up 68 locations on the way to approximately 125 sites before the full North American footprint is finalized.

Of the 68 locations more than 50 are operated by coaches who were already Proponent Group members. We always intended to give Proponent members the inside track and so far it has worked out very well.

The main focus is on signing the highest quality instructors in each metro market and promoting them as the top tier teachers in the game today. For example, GCA has already signed 49 coaches among Golf Digest's Best in State list, 22 Golf Magazine Top 100 Teachers and five LPGA and PGA National Teachers of the Year.

Now that GCA has established itself in most of the largest cities, we are beginning discussions with coaches in smaller markets. We're happy to provide more infor-

mation about whether or not your teaching operation would be a good fit for the GCA business model. To get a copy of the benefits provided by GCA along with information on the business model, contact Lorin Anderson at landerson@golfchannelacademy.com for full details.



68 Locations Currently Signed

As of 11/5/15

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Summit 2015: Exploring the Path Forward

Continued from page 1

“why” and the “how” of this impressive sports-performance system. And while the notion that the “lesson never ends” carries a warning for coaches against over-work and potential burnout, presentations from the likes of the EBC people and **Dr. Bob Neff** showed that golfers young and old could be trained to do plenty of self-diagnosis and self-correcting.

Several presentations provided strong ideas about the all-important junior market, including **Iain Highfield**’s talk on Monday morning, which hit that segment most directly. The unique approaches taken at Bishops Gate Academy in central Florida, where Highfield serves as Director of Mental Performance, were described in illuminating fashion. Walk the tee line there and you’ll see what look like political yard signs planted at each station—those are customized messages each junior has co-written with the coaches to remind them of their deepest motivations.

Every summit agenda alternates its content between the coaching craft and business-management concepts. Covering the latter angle this year, with a big emphasis on “customer experience,” were **Jeff Penson** of Golf Channel and

Jackie Beck, a veteran marketing and media consultant in the golf industry. In a Tuesday morning panel discussion, **Ed Oldham** and **Patrick Leahy** placed emphasis on the techniques and mindset that creates a big tent for teaching and coaching in order to max out the number of golfers involved. **Chris O’Connell** capped off the three-day

event with one further take on this topic, cutting to the heart of the fear factor that instructors seldom notice in prospective students and describing uncomplicated solutions to that problem.

Up from San Antonio and on hand for the entire summit was **David Ogrin**, longtime PGA Tour player and current director of instruction for what seems to be our industry’s most dynamic organization, Topgolf. For teaching professionals who haven’t known whether Topgolf is proof that golf is an outmoded notion or a sport that retains strong appeal, Ogrin provided truly meaningful answers.

Meanwhile, the record-breaking Demo Day exhibition of

sponsor products and services offered proof that Proponent members are indeed “haves” who aren’t shy about having even more, as they stocked their performance-improving arsenals with shiny new objects to go with the new information that streamed from the podium.



Topgolf’s David Ogrin



The Summit’s first ever Associate Member Session kicked off the week with a panel discussion including Cheryl Anderson and Brandon Stooksbury who talked about the decisions they made that benefitted their careers. Matt Wilson (left) and Corey Lundberg (right)—better known as the Curious Coaches—completed the afternoon session by sharing how they have successfully built their careers and the key influences they have tapped into to put them on the fast track.



Chris O’Connell of Plane Truth Golf Institute

Perspectives on Fair Compensation for Teachers

Within Proponent Group there are plenty of full-time, full-book golf instructors, dealing directly with golfers morning through night. But the ranks also include professionals who own large academies, own golf courses and even co-own multiple golf courses. For the Monday panel discussion titled, "Why it's So Hard to Get Instructors and Facilities to Agree on Pay," there was relevant commentary from the latter group—members who are still on-the-tee instructors but also bear profit-and-loss responsibility across departments and/or multiple properties. They engaged in a Q&A with the full assembly of summit attendees, complemented by guest panelist **Cathy Harbin** of ClubCorp, who is a longtime PGA professional now serving as vice president of the ClubCorp Academy and Programming.

Don Parsons, a dedicated career instructor and, more recently, a golf course owner, counseled his fellow Proponent members to keep in mind that the image of instructors in general isn't all that lofty, among decision-makers at facilities. "Most teachers aren't like the people in this room," commented Parsons. "They don't have your accomplishments, yet they'll display an attitude about themselves. They typically don't move the needle on overall facility revenue the way they think they do."

That means the burden of proof is still on the incoming instructor to show he or she will be a rainmaker and a good citizen as well, understanding bottom-line challenges faced by those at the top. "I have way more risk as an owner than I ever had as a teacher," Parsons commented matter-of-factly.

Another point that teachers who aren't managers may want to grasp involves an odd by-product of their newly rising profile. Teaching has moved past its old problem of being unappreciated and now encounters a problem: Staff instructors are being tapped to create and run programming that won't necessarily max out their incomes, rather it's designed to boost player development and support attraction and retention of members. This is a shift that gets instructors wrapped up in the big-picture, bottom-line issues of the fa-



Our panel consisting of four individuals who have both been hired as instructors and have sat on the other side of the desk and done the hiring took a deep dive into the issues that make it difficult to create compensation packages that are fair for both the teacher and the facility.

cility, instead of pinning back their ears and giving as many lessons as possible.

In the meantime, the U.S. Department of Labor is flexing its Wage and Hour muscle in a manner that hard-working golf instructors may wish it wasn't. According to **Kenny Nairn**, of Orlando's Celebration Golf Club, a facility that designates instructors as independent contractors now fears DOL audits that could declare that pro an employee, triggering liability on the club's part for back pay, especially overtime pay. ClubCorp's Harbin said her company was shying away from independent-contractor status for staff instructors, preferring to pay salaries and benefits and thus avoid running afoul of wage-and-hour laws.

"The ClubCorp legal department isn't giving golf managers very appealing choices right now, in terms of how we can staff up and schedule our instructors," said Harbin, referring to the problem of a teacher with employee status who goes beyond 40 work hours in a week, triggering overtime pay. She said that, in other industries that have a blurry line between the "1099" and 'W-2' members of the workforce, there are stories of disgruntled former employees complaining successfully to enforcement people and triggering audits that don't end well for management.

Brandon Stooksbury, who manages a team of staff instructors at Idle Hour Golf Club in Macon, Ga., encouraged full-time teachers to peer beyond their own silos. Stooksbury put it this way: "Every time you ask yourself, 'what can I do to build my business?' alternate that with the question,

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"What can I do to help build the club's business?" That doesn't preclude win-win scenarios, according to Brandon. For example, Idle Hour assistant professionals are receiving healthy compensation directly from group learning events designed by the instruction department, therefore the club is off the hook for having to compensate them more richly with salary dollars. For a club manager, that's a big difference.

Don Parsons also spoke to the waning use of independent contractors. "I've never valued being an employee myself," Parsons said, "I've always preferred independence. But the next person I hire to teach will be a full-time employee. The wage-and-hour risks are too formidable."

Stooksbury spoke more about the job-description side of the question. "The next instructor we bring on board is going to be an employee, making salary and benefits," he said. "I can't go with an independent because I can't sacrifice control. The instruction programming is too important to the club's business, to have somebody on property who can tell me, sorry, they aren't available at a given time to help with programming." It's great to be in demand, any teacher in attendance could conclude from all this. But is the task of negotiating healthy compensation getting easier, or more challenging?



A big thank you to TrackMan and Matt Frelich – who has never missed a Proponent Group Summit in our eight years of existence. TrackMan was the first company to sign on as a Proponent Group partner and we have been proud of our association with the company as we have both grown over the years. TrackMan also let our summit participants become the first pros in the U.S. to try the new TrackMan 4. Thanks Matt!

Instructor and Owner/Manager: Each Party's Priorities

According to panelists, what the teaching professional wants from the facility and what the facility wants from the teaching pro sets up like this:

Instructor's Wish List

- *To be well-compensated, in actual dollars and overall*
- *Good infrastructure (turf, practice balls, other amenities)*
- *Written contract or letter of agreement*
- *Fringe benefits (if an employee)*
- *Pipeline of prospective students*
- *Access to the golf course*
- *To be kept informed, kept in the loop*
- *A "seat at the table" when policy is discussed (range hours, etc.)*
- *Continuing-education support*
- *"Promote me, promote my programs"*
- *Chance to grow in the position*

Facility's Wish List

- *Instructor with a strong reputation and following ("Your own brand")*
- *Willingness on teacher's part to promote the facility*
- *Reliability, energy, enthusiastic personality*
- *Tech gear such as launch monitors, training aids*
- *Dedication to continued learning and cutting-edge techniques*
- *Flexibility, adaptability, sensitivity to facility's changing needs*
- *Initiative, new ideas, ability to program creatively*
- *A specialty that sets you apart*
- *Awareness of facility's revenue streams and how to bolster them*
- *Ability to "think like an owner"*
- *Player-development as a priority ("Are you creating golfers?")*

Every Ball Counts: Analytics Meets Motor Learning in a Sophisticated Platform

The typical Proponent Group Summit includes a deep dive into some newly developed methodology meant to upgrade the art and science of teaching. This year that dive was into Every Ball Counts (EBC), a UK-developed training system that is impressively complex yet disarmingly straightforward when you watch a trained EBC coach in action with a student.

“Every Ball Counts: Merging Elite Coaching with Golf Intelligence” was co-presented by **Darren May** and **Bill Davis**, working indoors with Powerpoint slides and outdoors with real golfers, respectively. May led summit-goers through the system’s conceptual roots and shared many of the sturdy scientific proofs that underlie it.

EBC owes much to the Shot-link stats that have wrapped pro-tour golf in a numerical matrix. It also owes something to Sabermetrics as a system for understanding skills and scoring in baseball. Brought to golf, it uses objective, hard data to open a new and creative means of truly moving the needle on player performance. For example, has it occurred to you to “score your players’ practices,” as May queried? In the EBC system, this is standard practice, in keeping with the “goal-based training methodology” the system represents.

In the “moneyball” analytics that Sabermetrics represents, something called the Pythagorean Expectation pours a team’s runs scored and runs allowed for a full season through a formula and generates a number of wins that is often exactly what the team recorded—but, if not, is accounted for through related statistical analysis. In Every Ball Counts, there is a column of skill-by-skill performance values—all numerically stated—with slide bars under each and off to the left a scoring composite. Using a cursor, May slid the bars left and right to show, for each skill, how influential a small improvement or falloff in that area would be on scoring. For example, changing the hole-out percentage on three-foot putts from 99 percent up to 100 percent lowered



Every Ball Counts (EBC) has effectively brought Moneyball to golf. Bill Davis took members through some sample stations from EBC training sessions. The idea is that improvement only happens when you can measure it.

the model 18-hole score much more than one might expect. It was a “gee whiz” moment for all summit-goers who had not seen this gadget previously.

Out on the Las Colinas practice putting and chipping area—in warm sunshine that had just arrived—Bill Davis moved assuredly through the EBC clinical procedures. One of its prominent facets involves coaching the golfer to isolate component parts of movement and performance into four stages: assessment; training of a single, isolated skill; “open space” sessions in which shots are attempted and scored; then, traditional play on the course. When, as often happens, the student proves unable to execute as wished in the “open space” segment, it’s a simple matter of doubling back to the stage where that skill is isolated and using a single teaching cue to get the golfer to demonstrate the desired movement. “Before I learned this system,” Davis noted, “I was trying to assess and coach and do open-space work at the same time. That’s not the optimal path to improvement.”

With most full-scale methodologies and coaching systems, the Summit experience tends to be a sampler that will pique curiosity for further study and inquiry. Many in the gathering certainly seemed intent on doing just that with Every Ball Counts.

Mental Toughness and Emotional Control: Dr. Bob Neff Offers Proven Tools

If a summit attendee took away just one nugget from **Dr. Bob**

Neff's presentation on Tuesday morning, it would be the tactic of asking competitive golfers these three questions, in sequence:

Do you practice every week? (Most of all will say they do.) Do you agree that mental skills and activity are a vital part of golf performance? (Most or all will agree.) Do you therefore take time every week to develop mental toughness and emotional control?

Most or all golfers, at that point, will shake their heads. Dr. Neff, a renowned practitioner whose Mental Training Inc. has certified 1,250-plus coaches to work with athletes in a dozen countries, playing all sports, knows why. "They don't what to

do," he says simply. In a one-hour talk that included his personal story of underachievement in junior tennis competition, Dr. Neff explained how the athlete's brain and emotions function. He focused on three main negatives—anger, anxiety and rapid, disorganized thinking.

Jeff Isler, the Dallas-based Proponent member and host professional for the 2015 Summit, has used the MTI approach for years and praised it while introducing Dr. Neff. Several college-age players, including one of Jeff's students, were used as examples of the three major issues and the coping exercises used to regain composure when unwanted patterns arise. The mental-emotional conditions most desired under the MTI approach are the "Zone-5 States," consisting of Calm, Confident, Carefree, Focused and Motivated. Interestingly, laughter and humor – however, one can find it or summon it – is one of the most reliable means of moving back into Zone-5. One important tool for continual use is the post-shot routine. Pre-shot routines are common, but a disciplined, consistent approach to the challenges of the post-shot moment is relatively rare.

Throughout preparation and during the competitive round, itself, a technique for replacing either anger, nerves or the scattered-thinking agitation, in order to move toward Zone-5, is simply to stop and objectively recognize the unwanted pattern.



Dr. Bob Neff explained how the athlete's brain and emotions function when put under stress.

Sounds simple enough, but it takes regular practice, including a breathe-relax protocol, use of visual imagery, and customized self-talk skills. "When you're reacting emotionally, you're on the outside of your own experience," explained Neff. "You get 'in' by simply recognizing the emotion, then you use your training."

The concept of being "outside" or "in" your own experience is exemplified in what MTI calls the "emotion wheel" that gets memorized by young athletes. Now there is a MentalApp Mobile Mental Trainer, to assist them, using phones, tablets or computers. Also there are streaming videos, practice tools and a tracking function, including an administrative area for coach and parent oversight. Players have a function in the suite in which they can orally "journal" into the App. "It lets them unload what just happened and narrate for themselves what their state is," Dr. Neff explained.

The MTI tracking tool can keep score of how much a player has done versus what the coach and the athlete together have designed for their mental-toughness routine. Four years in the making, the app is the only way to know if the work is being done on a continual basis, and what the emphasis is. Meanwhile, parents have a separate training program so that mother and father don't undermine the junior's process, as it's been designed and modified.

Ogrin Outlines a Role for Instruction in Fast-Growing, Fun-Based Topgolf

Within Proponent Group one could surely find a streak of purism, based on “dig it out of the dirt” and other values long associated with golf improvement. At the same time, each member has a livelihood to pursue, and it’s obvious that fun, friendship, the pleasure in every fine shot and the joys of a lucky bounce underlie anyone’s success in this business.

Which brings us to Topgolf—arguably the most profound success story in modern golf history—and to David Ogrin, former tour pro and now San Antonio-based director of instruction for Topgolf. In a presentation that blended Midwestern warmth and a mischievous wit, Ogrin did his best to explain to Proponent members what Topgolf is all about. He did so through a mix of storytelling, secret-sharing and some pretty amazing statistics. Ogrin concluded with an upbeat analysis of Topgolf’s potential to boost the entire industry and to stream new customers toward the teaching community.

Among the comments this veteran PGA Tour and Champions Tour competitor offered his audience, one observation stood out. “Topgolf has solved all the barriers to entry golf manages to put up,” declared Ogrin. “There might be a person somewhere who has walked into a Topgolf and felt intimidated, but if that’s happened I’ve never seen it.”

With so much to relate about the fast-growing chain, Ogrin at times simply tossed out facts to his summit audience. Some examples: Average visit length of a Topgolfer is 90 minutes and average spend is \$38 per person; Loaner drivers have Taylor-Made heads and fiberglass shafts; customer mix is 71 percent male, 29 percent female; eight out of 10 are college-educated and 56 percent have household income over \$100,000; the San Antonio location does about \$140,000 in revenue daily; the Las Vegas Topgolf will feature VIP bays with swimming pools and cabanas, plus event space to accommodate 2,000 guests. Despite his fine resume, Ogrin by his own admission isn’t highly paid at all, though his job satisfaction is sky-high. Among the



David Ogrin, Topgolf's Director of Instruction in San Antonio, explained why he believes millions of people will enjoy visits to Topgolf this year and what we can learn from Topgolf's success.

popular GolfTEC chain.

“I’m sitting on the biggest population of beginning golfers the world has ever seen,” Ogrin says, somewhat in awe himself. Meanwhile, watching people who don’t know how to grip it try to rip it—and seeing them succeed now and then—he recently came to this revelation: “The human fascination with ball-striking, the deep desire to hit a golf ball, and then hit it a little farther, has not waned. Not one bit.”

Do golf course owners approach Topgolf people and ask to set up programs in which Topgolfers can be converted to green-grass golfers? “Not that I’ve heard of, and that surprises me,” Ogrin said. “Maybe they don’t want the hassle of all these newbies running loose at their facility.” On his own, Ogrin has strategized about “crossover” programming, looking for a strategic way to “get ‘em on the grass.” Any Proponent member who’s down the road from one of these money-printing mega-ranges is invited to come forward with suggestions on that one.

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News Flash: Your Customer Needs More Attention

Remember when swings were first videotaped and then played back for students? The golfer's on-screen appearance and what they looked like hitting a ball was almost universally disappointing and unpleasant for them. A recent project conducted for Proponent Group by marketing and media expert **Jackie Beck** offers some of that same mild shock at what things are really like—this time for the golf instructor and the golf academy, as seen through the eyes of the customer.

Beck's natural presenting style is lively, warm, gently chiding and not shy with important observations, be they complimentary or critical. In "Customer Service Mistakes and How to Fix Them" she talked about secret-shopping Proponent members via website, email and phone calls to uncover what exactly an average lesson-taker (or someone pondering the possibility) would go through.

The "customer experience," with all its "touch points," to use the jargon of specialists like Beck, tends to be a blind spot for owners, managers and staff of any public-serving business or facility. This was a summit presentation that had Proponent members fully and personally involved in the content, even studying their own websites on their smartphones, real time, as Beck went through actual examples of what she saw working and not working. "Take off your teaching hat and look at the student experience from their point of view," was her pointed suggestion, one that every instructor with an eye toward business success might heed.

There were, as she discovered, member websites that didn't give the physical location where Coach XYZ teaches. There were Facebook and Twitter accounts that had not been updated in a year. There were multiple member websites that didn't provide lesson rates—possibly that was on purpose and strategic, Jackie noted, but in her view it's a tactic that's not effective anymore, given how accustomed



Golf marketing expert Jackie Beck, "Secret Shopped" more than 50 Proponent Members to identify customer service issues that can negatively affect the student's experience.

people are to getting all the info they want with a quick skim. The inclusion of driving directions was spotty, prompting Beck to say that smartphone GPS systems have, more than once, led her to maintenance barns a mile from the golf shop she was seeking.

Questions came at a rapid clip as Beck went through her presentation slides: When a golfer arrives at your facility for the first time, what signage do they see? Examples of effective and downright awful messages on signs were offered. What happens when you google "golf instruction" plus your own town or city—do you finish high on the results list? It was suggested that adding a Yelp reviews box to the home page could boost search-engine performance noticeably. If a friend of yours secret-shopped your facility by asking golf shop personnel about your teaching style and your programs, would the response be a shrug of the shoulders? That happens fairly often, according to Beck.

Yes, those early swing videos indeed disturbed and put off the golfers being taped—but hey they got over it and did their drills in the name of improvement. Take a similar objective look at the customer's experience before, during and after their visits to your place of business. Chances are your business performance will be a lot stronger.

SUMMIT SPECIAL REPORT

Proponent Partners Showed Attendees the Latest

Manning the tables along each wall of Proponent Group's meeting space at the 2015 Summit were many of the top specialty brands serving golf instruction worldwide. In addition, sponsor companies whose product lines are technologically complex—like

Trackman and K-Vest

Vest—also took to the podium with brief slide presentations to update attendees. Matt Frelich was once again on hand as representative and product expert for Trackman. A bragging right for Proponent Group involves the brand-new Trackman 4—it was shown in the marketplace for the very first time to this very Proponent Summit audience. As part of Matt's rundown of the latest development he mentioned a lowered price for Trackman 3e—down to \$20,000.

K-Vest was yet another Proponent sponsor bringing absolutely brand-new product to the Las Colinas gathering. It was actually on Demo Day eve that the latest iteration of the technology made it to Dallas for presentation. The current K-Vest sensor rig that a golfer wears during testing is downsized to the point that it's barely even a vest anymore. On screen, where teaching professionals have been used to seeing numbers and symbols, there is now a visually compelling

graphic model of the human trunk and torso. At this point, K-Vest has moved beyond diagnostics to a technology that accelerates human motion learning—assess motion and

then train motion, is the concept. The company is willing and able now to help coaches design and market programs for motor-skill acquisition.



Top: TrackMan debuted their new TrackMan 4 letting our members be the first to try it in the United States, while Sam Froggat (bottom) of Eyeline drew his usual crowd while showing off their latest putting training aids.

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Eyeline Golf never fails to cast important light on the human visual system and the physical motion of a golf ball across a putting surface. For some attendees, the company's SweetRoll device, with its color-coded circles along the pitched portion of the track, was an object of fascination—partly because even it can't "make" every putt it attempts. Members also enjoyed some demo time on the green with Bob Uebohofer, one of the **International Clubmakers Guild** representatives who lent their support. Uebohofer, a club designer in his own right, knows more than most about face-balanced putters—and the "toe-down" and "toe-up" variants—including some performance and coaching secrets that go along with each.

Golf MDs and its founder/CEO Alex Weber was a presence at the 2015 Summit, citing statistics like the 30,000-plus golf lessons its directory platform has booked for client coaches. Weber's shorthand to members about GolfMDs is to describe it as "an expedia.com for golf instruction." Also on hand was **USchedule**, which continues with steady innovation to problem-solve for busy teachers and help capture bookings that simply would have been missed using the pre-digital approach.

Bobby Jones CEO Andy Bell spoke briefly but convincingly during the dinner hour on Monday night. If you're a "Jones-ite" with dog-eared copies of "Down the Fairway" and "Golf is My Game" on your shelves, you had to get stirred up by Bell's genuine devotion to what the imitable Bob Jones was all about. Attendees who are just as enthused about owning classy golf apparel happily scooped up their complimentary X-H2O shirt from the Bobby Jones line.

Ben Hogan Golf Equipment was set up on the range for product testing and the sole markings on its perimeter-weighted blades are starting to look pretty normal—despite using static-loft values like 38, 42, 46 instead of traditional numbers like 7, 8 and 9. Clubfitters can be on the lookout for a fitting-cart unit to help with customization, coming in 2016. The Hogan folks were kind enough to provide Monday night's Texas Barbecue dinner and also gave every attendee an art poster of Hogan himself, captured in those classic photos by photographer Jules Alexander.

Also working with members on the big range was **Swing Catalyst**, the industry-leading ground-force technology provider. In a brief presentation about the use of the technology, members got some valuable details on the "center of force" as a critical readout—one that seems to defy the visual appearance of a golfer performing what's thought of as normal weight shift.

This monthly newsletter is a regular platform for the wisdom and creativity that comes out **RetailTribe**, so it was a very good thing to have the company's well-spoken representative, Rick Williams, on hand throughout the three-day event for consultation. Also dispensing new and valuable information to the assembled instructors was Bobby Foster, who heads up new sponsor company **Mental Golf Workshop**, a source many members already speak highly of through their existing relationships.

Any member who has lost the ability to make eight-foot putts—or for that matter three-footers—may have lingered for some time at the putting green station where **BioMech Golf** was set up. This company's audacious tilt-shafted putter wasn't designed with the idea that anchoring would be DQ'd by the USGA, but it's timing couldn't be better. Even if you never anchored, the sensation of setting up with this new flat-stick—ball back in your stance—and producing the authoritative roll that BioMech enables is very cool.

Among the Proponent sponsor corps are a few firms whose founder/CEOs are completely synonymous with the product. Jim Hackenburg of **Orange Whip** was in fine form, demonstrating drills, warm-ups, cool-downs and every other use of the ever-popular device he sold out of the back of his Toyota 4Runner in the early years, long ago. Pete Sanders of **Shot by Shot** was again on hand for deep discussions with members about his system, which was ahead of its time for a decade but with which industry thinking has finally caught up to.



BioMech Sports and their unique putter made their first trip to the summit.

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Summit Postcards from Dallas



Clockwise From Top Right: Bobby Jones made their first appearance at a Proponent Group Summit as our new apparel partner.

Andree Martin types away as dozens of pages of notes were taken by the typical attendee.

Las Colinas C.C.'s ballroom made for an ideal venue for our members and industry types.

Members sift through lots of great information on more than a dozen topics to decide how to adjust their teaching businesses in the coming year.

Summit participants enjoy all their meals and happy hours together making for a unique networking experience each year.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: K-VEST

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: K-VEST



It's time to move better.



603-472-4856 | sales@k-vest.com

NEW MEMBER BENEFIT: INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR GUIDE

Answering an Urge to Be Your Own Boss Today an Employee, Tomorrow an Independent

Not every golf instructor ends up self-employed, though plenty get the urge. If you're one of them, here's a summary of the hoops you'll need to jump through.

By John Torsiello, Contributing Writer

A steady paycheck, familiar surroundings, helpful mentoring, possibly even free coffee: These are the benefits of full-time employment enjoyed by most up-and-coming golf instructors. But eventually the positives can be outweighed by a sense that one is professionally stifled, undercompensated, or both. At that point the urge to become an independent contractor may strike.

All well and good, but the moment you feel ready to leave the club payroll is not the time to move—it's the time to start preparing to move. It's your cue to dive into all the planning and pro forma arithmetic your "big break" will require. It starts with scouting out locations, assessing the demographics of a target marketplace, forecasting potential income, potential costs and myriad other issues.

Questions quickly arise: How will the loss of salary and benefits affect you? How about the new costs you'll bear—for rent, marketing and so forth? Objectively speaking, do you have a strong enough following to attain success on your own? Becoming an independent contractor also calls for research to keep you from running afoul of the IRS or other federal and state agencies. And it means protecting your earnings and livelihood, now and in the future, through retirement planning.

The potential advantages of self-employment are notable—that's why so many people are drawn to it. "To me the biggest upside is having more control over my time," says Mark Polich, a Proponent Group member who operates an academy in Arizona. To make sure he maintains that control, an independent like Polich carves out a contract with his facility owner that keeps him free of ancillary duties. "Put it in your contract that you're not on the hook for setting up the range, working the counter, running tournaments, things like that," advises Polich.

The price of freedom, he feels, comes mainly in the form of lost benefits and perks. "You cut yourself off from paid vacations, health insurance, discounts in the golf shop, playing privileges

and other extras like that," Polich cautions.

Kandi Comer is a Proponent member who can look back with satisfaction on the planning process that set up her most recent move. Pondering relocation she searched her region of Virginia for a semi-private facility that would allow her students to follow her when she made the move. "I also looked at the future of the facility," Comer recalls. "The site I chose was in a young community located in a town that was really growing. The future was good for juniors because it was the best school system in the area, and their bus routes weren't particularly long, which meant I could do after-school programs."

She advises any fellow member considering the independent option to sketch out a plan that accounts for the other teaching professionals at the facility. "I negotiated exclusive teaching rights for my academy," she explains, "which meant I could hire instructors from outside or work with the PGA and LPGA profes-

sionals who were already on-site." You also need to find out right away about clubfitting and equipment sales. "Who has the right to fit clubs? Who controls the hardgoods inventory? Who gets what percentage of sales—all that has to be figured out," says Comer.

In her view, the appeal of independent-contractor status often stems from a sense that

"all you'll have to do is teach." That's a tempting daydream, but it's not the gritty reality of business ownership and management. "You have to teach, market, keep the books and do whatever it takes to run a business," Comer points out. Her baseline requirements for the independent instructor look like this: "Make sure you form an LLC or an S-Corp and make sure you have adequate business insurance. Be certain the facility you rent space from has a place you can teach during bad weather. And, obviously, insist on a written contract with the facility."

She adds a list of other boxes to check, such as finding out how much you'll have to pay for range balls and what your access to the course and the golf carts will be. "This all needs to be in your contract," she warns. "Pay attention to details and talk to teaching pros who have been through the process."

Henry Brunton, owner of Henry Brunton Golf of Canada, believes many teachers elect to go independent based on perceived financial advantages—some of which are illusions. "You have to understand how your arrangement will look to a tax auditor," Brunton warns. "Are you independent in the eyes of the law—that's a big question." On the pay stubs you've received

"To me the biggest upside is having more control over my time," says Mark Polich. "Put it in your contract that you're not on the hook for setting up the range, working the counter, running tournaments, things like that."

NEW MEMBER BENEFIT: INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR GUIDE

twice a month for so many years, all those withheld taxes are a frustration—one that goes away when you become self-employed. That can be a problem, according to Brunton. Golf coaches should avoid the temptation to “keep as much money in their pockets as possible,” he says. That means setting up a self-employment pension plan, making your estimated payments and keeping careful records of them. Before you actually quit your job, he suggests, take one last look at “all the advantages and protections of being an employee.”

Understand Your Tax Situation

To Brunton, the value of self-employment comes largely in the form of business-cost deductions and tax advantages that are unavailable to employees. Disadvantages, as mentioned, can include being responsible for running a business, i.e. filing complicated taxes, paying employees, keeping detailed and accurate accounting records. “Independent contractors,” he points out, “are responsible for health insurance, business insurance, and their own 401K/retirement plans.” Thus, having a CPA or an attorney confirm that you are a legitimate independent contractor is vital. “Don’t assume anything. Protect yourself legally and financially,” says Brunton. “Get advice and confirmation from a CPA, so you do not put yourself at risk.”

Darina Koltsova, a client relationship manager for Independent Contractor Tax Advisors, spells things out candidly. “Under current U.S. tax law,” Koltsova says, “independent contractors have the potential to pay more in taxes than any other group. It’s not uncommon for contractors to end up in a tax bracket higher than 50 percent. This means that of every dollar you earn, various government entities can together be taking 50 cents of it.” She says the reason is three-fold.

First, self-employment taxes (FICA) are 15.3 percent for most independent contractors. If you’re a traditional employee, half of that 15.3 percent is paid by your employer—once on your own, you’re responsible for the entire amount. Second, the tax-prep advice a self-employed person could legitimately use isn’t easy to come

by. The information is a dense thicket of home-office deductions, S Corps, MERPS (medical expense reimbursement plans), use of childrens’ tax brackets and other means of lessening the tax burden. “Not all tax advisors are created equal,” Kolstova states. “Most do not understand how to use these options properly to reduce a client’s tax bill. Many don’t even tell their clients about these legitimate deductions, in order to avoid the hard work and hassles that comes with them.”

Third on her list is administrative burden and expense. The solutions to the above problems require time and cost money. “Most independent contractors are extremely busy and simply do not have the resources to focus on their tax situation. For the do-it-yourselfer, this takes a significant amount of effort,” she says. “You must study and compare the value of acting as a sole proprietor or forming an S Corp. You have to set up payroll with the federal and state governments and remain compliant, make quarterly tax filings and payments, maintaining a clean set of books and perhaps ultimately filing an S-Corp tax return that requires significant expertise.: This could easily cost \$5,000 or more annually, according to Kolstova, depending on your CPA’s rates.

Tips From an Independent Contractor

Proponent Group member **Mark Polich**, owner of Mark Polich Golf in Arizona, offers some valuable tips on the process of becoming an independent contractor:

- Be aware that you are responsible for the employee and employer portion of Social Security taxes.
- Be aware that you are responsible for filing quarterly tax payments.
- Be aware that you must arrange for and pay for your own professional liability insurance.
- Understand that you will be responsible for purchasing all items required for teaching.
- Understand that you will probably not be eligible for any typical employee benefits.
- Make sure you are entrepreneurial-oriented in order to generate enough money to survive.
- Make sure you are creative enough to think through multiple opportunities to generate money.
- Make sure you have the common sense and experience required to run a business.

Polich’s thoughts on misconceptions of being an independent contractor and common mistakes:

- The biggest misconception may be that “this is easy.” It is not. It is very difficult.
- Misconception--the organization you are working for really cares about you and your business.
- Mistake—Under-capitalization. Not having enough money set aside for getting things rolling.
- Mistake--thinking that because you are a good player, you are automatically a good teacher.
- Mistake--thinking that because you are good player, golfers will be willing to pay you to teach them.
- Mistake--thinking that because you are a good teacher, golfers will be willing to pay you to teach them.

Manage Your Risks

Independence also means managing business risk. Byron Shultz, an employee benefits consultant for MJ Insurance in Arizona, reminds non-employed teachers that they aren’t covered by any of the policies maintained by the facilities where they ply their trade. This includes general liability, property protection, worker’s compensation and medical benefits. If the independent contractor is a PGA member, he or she will receive coverage through the PGA insurance program as part of annual membership dues. “However,” cautions Shulz, “this coverage is very limited and the exclusions need to be read when you’re trying to comply with contract requirements.”

The PGA policy is designed specifically for the independent contractor who acts as a sole proprietor, because the policy is written in the name of ‘Bob Smith, PGA.’ Coverage does not extend to ‘Bob Smith Golf, LLC’ or ‘Bob

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Smith Golf, LLP.' Also, the PGA product is only for general liability, which covers third-party property damage and bodily injury. "There is no property coverage for computers, video, training aids, and other items," explains Shultz. Speak with an insurance risk management professional and have them learn about your operations and the associated risks. Having the correct insurance products can protect these viable risks. There is more information on coverage at www.golfproinsurance.com.

Handling Payments

Another self-employment function you'll encounter is credit card processing. This can be a bothersome and confusing aspect of running your small business, according to Niles Crum of NDC Payment Solutions, who is a longtime Proponent Group advisor. "I could write a book on the subject," he says ruefully, "but a good short cut is for the golf instructor to confer with other business owners they trust for referrals about potential vendors."

In credit card processing, there are four primary pricing schemes: tiered pricing; flat-rate pricing; enhanced bill-back pricing; pass-through plus pricing. Crum's advice: Insist on pass-through plus pricing and don't pay more than 40 basis points over interchange and 10 cents per transaction. Read your agreement completely and review all fees. Your processor should walk you through each and every fee. If they don't review all the fees, or if there is anything you don't understand, ask for an explanation, covering such arcane items as an "ACH reject fee" or "charge-back" fee. Crum also advises doing business with a vendor that does not charge an early-termination fee. "Make sure your merchant account is PCI compliant, so that if there is ever a data breach, your fines and fees are significantly reduced," he suggests. In general, try to deal with someone who understands your business and can set you up correctly to start.

"It would be wise to reach out to three potential vendors and let each vendor know you are interviewing three companies," says Crum. "Don't necessarily go with the lowest bidder, go with someone who has been in the industry for at least three years, whom you feel has the most integrity and honesty. Realize that every merchant agreement allows the processor to raise their rates at any time for any reason." Trust and reputation are key here, since once you sign on the dotted line will you be on the hook for at least three years.

If credit card accounts are not set up properly there could be considerable inefficiency in the system, including delayed processing, downgraded transactions, higher costs and security risks. Independent contractors may wind up paying for equipment not needed, or equipment not best suited to the payment processes needed. "If you are billing a customer monthly for the same amount," Crum says, "you need a recur-pay solution, to avoid having to manually bill them every 30 days." Doing business with a processor who offers an "account updater" solution that automatically updates expired credit cards will save you and your customer frustration with declined cards. A solid vendor will ask many questions about the merchant's business before making a recommendation on a solution that best suits the merchant.

Take Your Financial Future Into Your Own Hands

Another potentially damaging mistake independent contractors make is foregoing long-term financial planning. "Americans love to spend and hate to save," says Adam Bergman of IRA Financial Group, headquartered in New York City. Bergman has authored a book "Going Solo: America's Best Kept Retirement Secret For the Self-Employed," so he speaks from good experience. "About 40 percent of households with residents between 25 and 64 have no retirement savings," Bergman reports, citing a study by the National Institute on Retirement Security.

According to Bergman, independent contractors are often unaware that they can establish a dedicated 401(k) plan for the business. Many independent contractors are being advised to establish traditional IRAs or SEP-IRAs, which will limit the amount they can save for retirement. Another reason is that many independent contractors are consumed with matters involving operating their business and feel that they are not able to spend the time and resources on retirement saving. "This is a major misconception. You don't have to be earning high six figures to start saving for retirement," Bergman says. "The key is starting as early as possible and making annual contributions."

He cites the example of an independent contractor who is able to save \$5 a day (\$1,825 annually) from age 25 through age 70 while averaging a 7 percent annual rate of return. This individual would amass almost \$558,000 by retirement. "Now," says Bergman, "imagine an independent contractor who's able to save \$10,000 a year with a Solo 401(k) plan starting at age 32 and continuing through age 70, again assuming an average annual return of 7 percent. That person would have close to \$1.4 million, a pretty impressive total."

A Solo 401(k) plan is an IRS-qualified retirement account for business owners who have no employees other than themselves and perhaps their spouse. Like a SEP-IRA, a Solo 401(k) plan allows the participant to contribute up to \$59,000 each year. "The problem," says Bergman, "is that many independent contractors are not aware of the power of tax deferral and the enormous benefits of the Solo 401(k) plan. The IRS is giving the self-employed the power to retire rich, but not enough people are aware of its availability."

Enjoy the Challenge of Running the Business

To make independence pay off, you need to take the view of an instructor like Comer, who has learned to enjoy the non-teaching duties. "You can make as much income as you are willing to work for—that's a great feeling," says Comer. "Over time you'll become proud of your other skills—marketing through social media, keeping good records, working with your accountant, building relationships of all kinds to support your business."

In the end, you'll be signing both sides of the paycheck, not just the back—and you'll have more power to increase the size of that check. At that point you won't care so much about free coffee.

For more information on setting up your own instruction business, visit the members website and go to the Business Guides section.



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Videos: Begin with the Real End in Mind

By Ian James, CEO, RetailTribe

Last month we started a conversation about videos and how golf instructors could use them effectively. By far the greatest number of videos we see show the professional giving a swing tip. The message it sends: This PGA professional has expertise about golf swing technique.

This month we're examining a pre-shoot document. It consists of video direction and a script. Probably the most important part is the "Video Plan," which we've included below.

Here's the big news: Most golfers trust that you understand the golf swing. Most golfers assume you're a friendly, approachable person. Most golfers probably also believe you are able to improve their golf skills. So, why do such a low percentage of recreational and even "engaged" golfers enroll in coaching programs?

Most golfers need to be inspired to take action to improve. Your marketing content needs to highlight your expertise less – it needs to create more action on the part of

the golfer. Video is a form of marketing content that can do that.

If you doubt the message above, then please watch the following two car promotions at: www.retailtribe.com/features/caradverts. In neither video is there much about the car. Both tap into the emotion of the target audience. We explain what that emotion is if you follow the link.

On the next page you will see a sample script of a simple video that taps into the golfer's desire to gain or, especially, recover distance off the tee, while enjoying themselves, without the threat of a hard slog.

My advice to coaches is to make sure that 75 percent of your marketing content is celebrating a result you've achieved for golfers. That goes for the videos you produce and distribute. Tell stories about real people. Tell fun stories about golfer success.

For world-class marketing designed to drive more customers, contact Rick Williams on 215-622-6324 or rickwilliams@retailtribe.com.

Video Plan	
Objective	Create potential customers for my upcoming coaching promotion 'Further down the fairway'; Market my ability to deliver results;
Target golfer	Slightly older golfers who struggle to hit tee shots much beyond 200 yards and also those who are inaccurate. For this video we're looking to appeal to traditional males.
Key message	I can improve your distance from the tee, sometimes by more than 30 yards, with simple changes that will improve the accuracy of your shots with all clubs.
Call to Action	Sign up for our '20 yards further down the fairway' coaching program for April.
Overview	Show a golfer with a poor weight transfer and a downswing starting with poor lower body sequence and then the same golfer with an improved downswing sequence with the improved statistics.

Be very clear about your objective

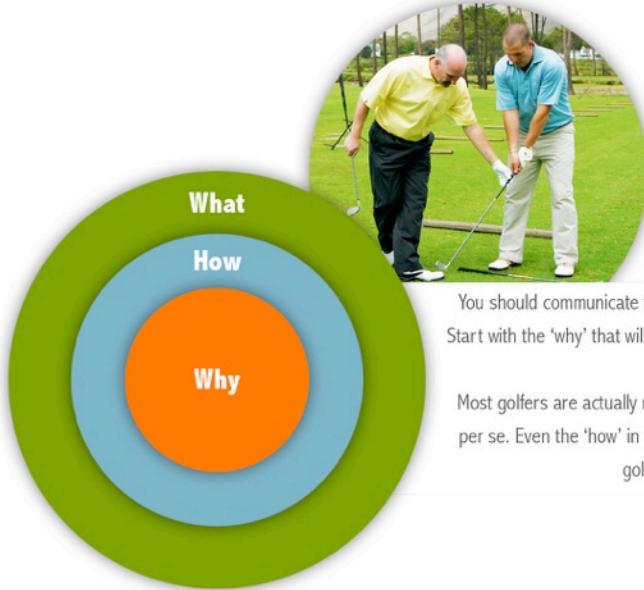
Too many videos are just tips and seem a little short of a clear objective other than showing you understand the swing. The vast majority of golfers are interested in a result and the likelihood that they can achieve it.

Your target customer should star in your video

Most videos I see have the Professional showing how it should be done. We, the customers, know you can do it. The question is: can you teach us how to do it? The customer should be the star of the story. It has a bigger impact on our trust in your ability.

As you plan out your video content for your website, YouTube channel, Facebook page and additional media opportunities, follow the key points in the video plan above including having your target customer star in the video and making sure you have a very clear call to action at the end of each clip.

RETAILTRIBE ON MARKETING



You should communicate from the 'golfer's why' outwards.
Start with the 'why' that will inspire the golfer to come to you.

Most golfers are actually not that interested in the 'lesson' per se. Even the 'how' in the video isn't going to bring the golfer to you.

Make sure that 75 percent of your marketing content is celebrating a result you've achieved for your students. Tell stories about real people.

Introduction	"It's great fun adding 20, 30 and sometimes more yards to a golfer's tee shots. Especially a golfer who's never been long, or one who's lost yards as they get a little more experienced." "Hi, I'm pro name, from name of facility in city and I want to add fun to your golf game".
Act One: The result	S1: video of two golfers on the course with one of them teeing off: "This is John Roberts and Frank Child. Between them they've added over 50 yards to their tee shots" S2: John Roberts before & after LM stats. "Both have added at least 25 yards to their tee shots. Sixty-one year old John is hitting the ball further than when he was in his forties".
Act Two: The problem	S1: video starting from John at a good position on his backswing and then passing through the downswing – pausing after the first movement – and then starting again through impact. Commentary: "Many golfers get to the top of the downswing in a good position, as John does here. But watch John's first movement back. It's his left shoulder starting the down swing. He's releasing the coil between hips and shoulders too early. He's also now got his hands outside. John's lost power, his hands are outside, and he's losing more power because he can't release the club head. The chances are this is also going right of the fairway". S2: show the launch monitor stats with an emphasis on club head speed. "John's club head speed is just mph. That's not enough to create any length."
Act Three: The improvement	S1: show the improved launch monitor stats. "Some simple changes to his swing and John's new club head speed is an extra 5 mph. He's also on a much better swing path. That means better contact, straighter ball flight, and a lot of extra yards."
Act Four: The How	S1: show John's new swing from the top, with a pause after the first movement. "A small difference, notice how the downswing has kicked off from the ground up. The coil is maintained – with the hips leading the shoulders – the swing is also on plane. John can now release the club head as well as having all the coil left to unload a faster club head speed. Extra speed, better contact, more distance. In this case 26 yards extra distance". S2: John Roberts and Frank Child facing the camera. "We had a lot of fun improving our technique with Jim Jones adding distance. The changes might appear small, but the impact is bigger than we could ever imagine".
Close:	S1: Facing camera: "John and Frank aren't just benefiting from extra distance, and extra fun off the tee. They're also benefiting from more accuracy in their approach shots. The changes they've embraced make it easier to hit the ball on target with the whole bag." S2: Show the program offer: "You can have the same results. Bring a friend or friends and we can have some social fun, or book in for one-on-one coaching and we can focus on the way you attack the golf ball. Call us or email us. Details are on the screen. Or come into the shop and chat to us." S3: Facing camera – finish with whatever your proposition is: eg "Remember, we're here to help you along on your journey to better golf and more fun. Let us help you, enjoy your golf".

Key points to pick out

1. This script opens with the result, 'the reason why', made clear within the first 15 words.
2. The second 15 words highlight the target golfer.
3. In the first 10 seconds we've established what result you can deliver to a golfer, even if they don't watch the rest of the video. But, hopefully, our target customer is going to be inspired to carry on.
4. Our target customer will recognize themselves in the example golfers they see.
5. Total video time is 90 – 100 seconds. Videos that go past 120 seconds need to be very compelling to maintain interest and get the viewer to the call to action.
6. The before and after is used to highlight a small change without too much technical detail.
7. For the answer the golfer needs to come to you – advertise the product.

Here is a script that shows how to tap into the golfer's desire to gain distance off the tee without the threat of a long process to see improvement.

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 MENTAL GOLF
WORKSHOP PROFILE
POWERED BY THE DISC PROFILE SYSTEM

Report Prepared For
Cheryl Anderson

 Mike Bender
GOLF ACADEMY

Bobby Foster developed the original golf profile in 2004 after using DISC with his corporate consulting clients for 15 years. Version 6 was launched this summer. Bobby is a former golf professional and college coach, and a member of the South Carolina Golf Hall of Fame.

"I saw how DISC profiles impacted people in the workplace and other areas of their lives, and decided to convert DISC into golf terminology. The acceptance of our system by coaches and their students has been very gratifying."

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Fun and Games the Mantra for 2016 and Beyond



Do you think maybe we take golf and golf instruction too seriously? Just look at most instructor newsletters and marketing materials. It's usually about the new technology they just bought, or a new training program or awards won by their staff or themselves. This is all well and good, but if you've been watching the next generation as they examine whether or not golf is going to become one of their regular activities, we may want to think a bit more about how to inject more fun and a more casual and social atmosphere into playing and learning the game.

I was pleased to hear the word "fun" mentioned more at this year's summit in Dallas than in the past seven summits combined. It seems that we too often become overly focused on the "how" of making golfers better and not enough on the emotional highs enjoyed from working on their games.

On the plane back from the Summit, I was reading an interview in Golfweek with Troon Golf's Dana Garmany. As the Chairman and CEO of the world's largest golf management company he is privy to a worldwide view of what's happening in the industry. He makes a pretty good case that Millennials are already making decent money but are spending it on things like road bikes and family activities that only take an hour or two to complete. His point is that it's not that the next generation can't afford the game, they're just choosing to spend their money elsewhere.

He also reinforces what David Ogrin made clear last week at the summit when discussing Topgolf's enormous success: Topgolf eliminates intimidation and embarrassment. Two very strong emotions that have always made golf a sport with significant emotional barriers to entry.

Another interesting point made by Garmany is that today's 35-year-old golfer talks more about who he played with than where he played. It's simply more of a social occasion for many younger golfers and we need to be aware of this as we design instruction programming.

Can we create more programs that allow people to share lessons with a buddy or family member?

Can we make the learning atmosphere less intimidating?

Can we do a better job of remembering that it's a game that doesn't have to be super competitive to be lots of fun?

Can we always remember that striking a few more solid shots each round is really what most golfers are looking for?

Most of the new tools we have at our disposal as instructors are generally designed to help the 5-10 percent of lesson takers who are competition focused. That is all wonderful, but let's not lose sight of the bigger picture.

Garmany doesn't see the situation as dire, but golf has to make generational adjustments like every business must. He believes that things like 9-hole rounds, jeans in the dining room and music piped onto the practice range will rule in the near future, but is there really anything wrong with these changes?

Some teachers get a little worked up about change "ruining" the game they grew up with. But, remember, the game we all grew up with was different than the game our parents learned. If golf was only about traditions, we'd still be playing hickory shafts while wearing a tweed coat or long dress. The game will continue to evolve and hopefully Proponent Group members will be part of energizing the next generation to appreciate and enjoy all the ups and downs of playing one of the greatest games ever created. Let's try to find more ways to make it fun and recognize that even though the facade may change, the essence remains the same.

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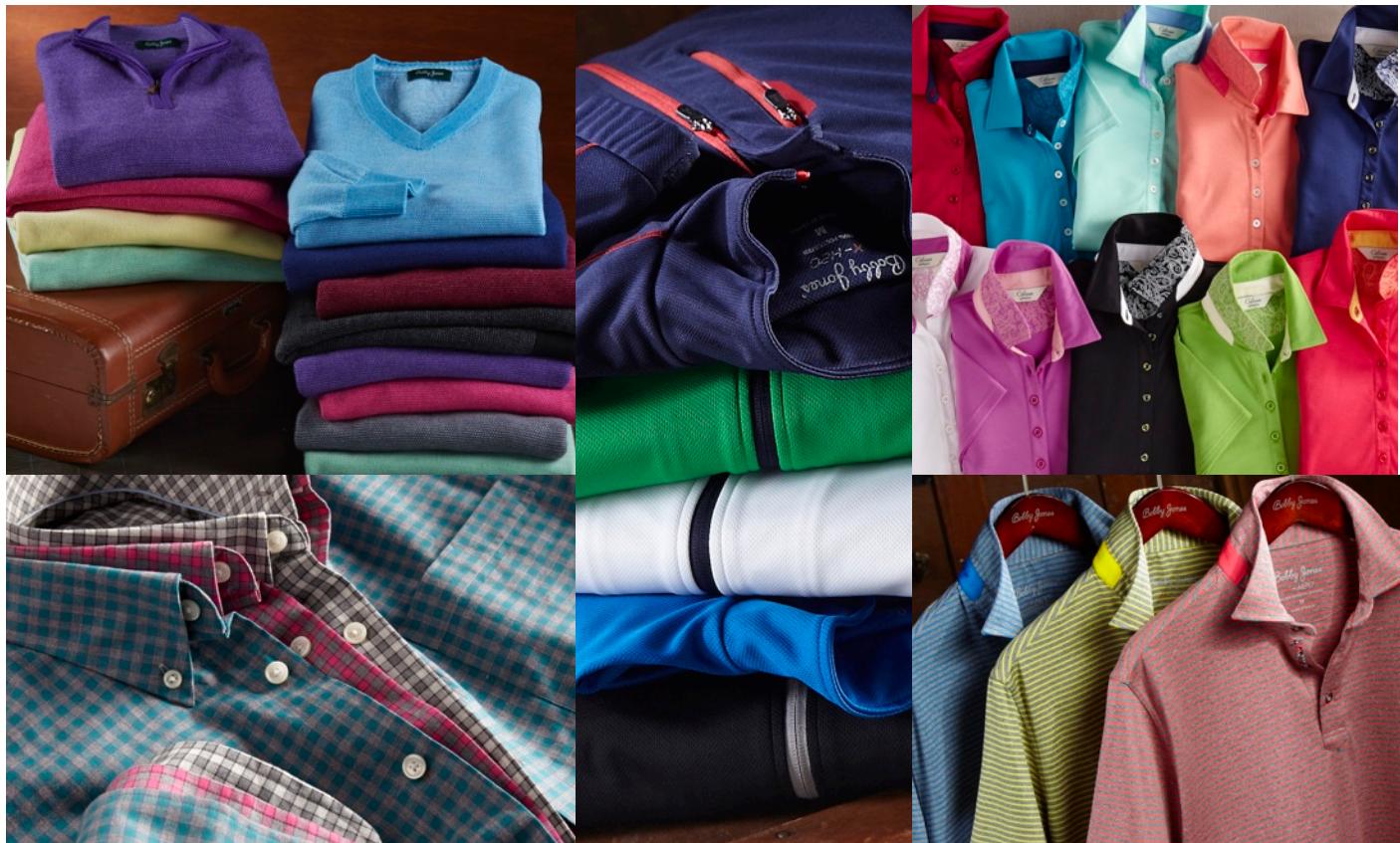


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MEMBER MILESTONES

Please Welcome Proponent Group's New Members for October 2015

Bart Bernard, Legacy Golf Performance Center, Phoenix, AZ - Associate Member

Gary Blaisdell, Legacy Golf Performance Center, Phoenix, AZ - Associate Member

Craig Bocking, Bocking Golf Academy at Burning Tree Country Club, Decatur, AL - Full Member

Randy Chang, Journey at Pechanga, Temecula, CA - Full Member

Michael Deiters, Meadow Links & Golf Academy, Forest Park, OH - Full Member

Katie Detlefsen, Raptor Bay Golf Academy, Bonita Springs, FL - Associate Member

Randy Henry, Randy Henry's Dynamic Golf at Coeur D'Alene Resort, Coeur D'Alene, ID - Full Member

Maria Kostina, Randy Henry's Dynamic Golf at Coeur D'Alene Resort, Coeur D'Alene, ID - Associate Member

Tom Losinger, Bridgemill Athletic Club, Tucker, GA - Associate Member

Ric Moore, Ric Moore Golf at Monterey Golf Club, Monterey, CA - Full Member

Tim Weinhart, Heritage Golf Links, Tucker, GA - Full Member

Dan Winget, Mike Bender Golf Academy, Lake Mary, FL - Associate Member

Quarcelino Recognized in Tennessee

Nancy Quarcelino has been named one of Nashville and Middle Tennessee's Top 50 Most Influential people in sports. The prestigious list includes athletes, coaches, administrators and successful business owners in the Nashville area. The only other golf-related people on the list were Brandt Snedeker and Vince Gill for his support of junior golf in the region.



The Proponent Team

Lorin Anderson President

David Gould Staff Editor

Lori Bombka Operations Manager

Debbie Clements Accounting

Todd Wilson CEO, Golf Channel Academy

Scott Novell President, Golf Channel Academy

Vangellow Elected to National LPGA T&CP President



Proponent Group member and LPGA Master Professional Deb Vangellow has been elected as National President of the LPGA Teaching and Club Professional Membership for 2016-2018. After serving as the organization's National Vice President for the past six years, she will lead this global, industry-leading pillar of the LPGA.

Vangellow is the 2012 LPGA National Teacher Of The Year, an LPGA and Golf Digest Woman Top 50 Teacher, a Golf Digest and Golf Magazine "Top Regional Teacher", a US Kids Golf Top 50 Master Kids Teacher, and a GRAA Top 50 Growth Of The Game Professional. She teaches at Riverbend C.C. in Sugar Land, Texas.

Rader Honored with Ellen Griffin Award

The LPGA's Ellen Griffin Award recognizes an individual who has made a major contribution to the teaching of golf and who emulates Griffin's spirit, love and dedication to students, teachers and the game of golf. She was a pioneering and beloved teaching professional who positively affected generations of instructors.



This year's recipient is Dana Rader, the current national president of the LPGA T&CP and one of the very first Proponent Group members. She owns the very successful Dana Rader Golf School at Ballentyne Resort in Charlotte, North Carolina.

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