

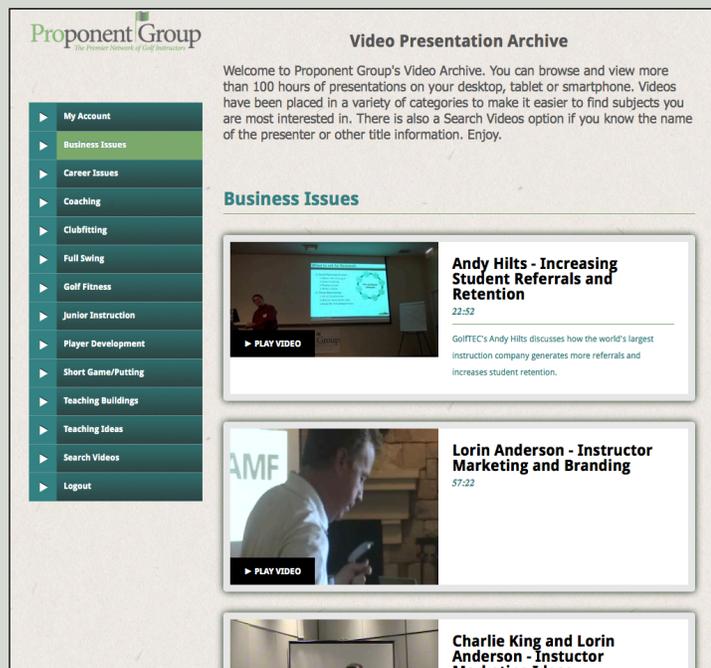
COLLABORATE

www.proponent-group.com

Member Website Upgrades Include Improved Video Viewing Features

Over the past six years Proponent Group has developed an archive with more than 100 hours of presentations on a variety of topics including business and marketing issues, coaching techniques, teaching the swing and short game, golf fitness, junior instruction and much more. The volume of information was becoming hard to sort through when looking for a specific speaker or topic so we've upgraded our members website with new video functionality. The new video archive includes a categories menu for the archived videos along with a search function that allows you to find the videos you are looking for by presenter, topic and/or additional keyword information.

This new improved video archive arrives just in time for the addition of nearly a dozen new presentations from our just completed 2013 Summit. Look for these new videos to be added on weekly basis beginning this month. The new summit



The screenshot shows the Proponent Group website's Video Presentation Archive. On the left is a navigation menu with categories like My Account, Business Issues, Career Issues, Coaching, Clubfitting, Full Swing, Golf Fitness, Junior Instruction, Player Development, Short Game/Putting, Teaching Buildings, Teaching Ideas, Search Videos, and Logout. The main content area is titled "Video Presentation Archive" and includes a welcome message. Below this, there's a "Business Issues" section with three video thumbnails:

- Andy Hilts - Increasing Student Referrals and Retention** (22:52): GolfTEC's Andy Hilts discusses how the world's largest instruction company generates more referrals and increases student retention.
- Lorin Anderson - Instructor Marketing and Branding** (57:22): A video featuring Lorin Anderson.
- Charlie King and Lorin Anderson - Instructor Marketing Ideas**: A video featuring Charlie King and Lorin Anderson.

We've made it much easier to find what you want to watch in our 100-plus hours of video presentations and more topics are coming later this month.

videos will join a cast of presenters who include many of the game's finest instructors, consultants, business specialists and industry veterans.

The public portion of the website has also received a full updating.

To better serve our members, more upgrades will be added including better mobile access to our site, a more efficient email delivery system and improved search and viewing functions for our webinar archives.

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Member Milestones

PROPONENT GROUP NEWS

Retail Tribe Partnership to Provide Expanded Marketing and Sales Education for All Proponent Members

Retail Tribe believes in the power of the expert to sell and market to golfers. The company coordinates and manages promotional campaigns for more than 1,000 golf professionals and golf instructors around the globe. Because Proponent Group also believes in your value as one of the game's top experts, we will be partnering with Retail Tribe to educate our members to rethink your marketing opportunities to better leverage your expert status.

Ian James, Retail Tribe's CEO, spoke at Proponent Group's 2013 Summit and explained how instructors can market their lesson programs much more effectively by focusing on the golfer's wants and hopes. He showed the example of how Apple almost never describes specific features of their products, instead showing the products solving a problem the user is facing. When the consumer identifies a product as solving a problem they are interested in the desire for that product soars in the consumer's mind.

Retail Tribe uses carefully crafted campaigns to build your personal teaching brand, promote your local programming and inspire golfers to take action and purchase instruction. The company leverages email, your website, social media and traditional editorial opportunities to build a community around your expertise. The result is a steady stream of new students and increased loyalty from current les-



Retail Tribe wants to leverage your expertise to better market your instruction programs.



son takers.

Retail Tribe will use surveys of your facility's membership to help properly target the promotions and will create campaign calendars that coordinate all the pieces of each campaign so that over a specific period of time – say a month or so – the campaign builds to its conclusion with sales of the specific program tied to the campaign.

Retail Tribe will be working closely with Proponent

Group to provide newsletter articles, marketing workshops – including one planned for the 2014 PGA Merchandise Show in January (details to come soon) – and initial consultations regarding your individual businesses' current marketing and revenue situation.

To learn more about Retail Tribe visit their website at www.retailtribe.com. The company offers multiple levels of service to manage your marketing and help you inspire and educate golfers if you choose to engage them.

Year-end Preparations: The Keys to Setting Yourself up for a Hassle Free 2014

In the Proponent Group members website is a Business Template called the **Instructor Program Annual Report**. At Proponent we're very big on communications between our members and their facility management team. Too often there is a disconnect between management's expectations for the instruction program and the instructor's goals.

This report allows you to show management step-by-step the accomplishments of your programs during 2013 including all lesson programs, hardgoods sales, player development and additional revenues that were generated. The report also allows you to present ideas to improve areas that did not meet expectations or to pitch ideas for new programs for 2014.

Not a month goes by in which our office doesn't get a call from a member who just found out that their facility or club "wants to go in a new direction" and they aren't part of it.

Instead, we prefer to see the direction of the instruction program agreed upon before the season begins and with agreed upon performance measures so that everyone is working to achieve the same goals.

Surprises are rarely a good thing when dealing with your managers. Complete and submit your annual report before the new year begins.

<p>Name of Facility</p>
<p>Instruction Program Annual Report</p>
<p>Prepared For: Name of Facility Golf Committee</p>
<p>Prepared By: Name of Professional, Director of Instruction</p>
<p>Name of facility Street Address, City, State Zip Telephone</p>
<p>  </p>
<p><small>(Check all boxes that don't apply)</small></p>

Listening Intently at Talking Stick

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Check out the décor in Talking Stick Resort's common spaces and you're likely to spot a petroglyph that the Pima Indians call The Man in the Maze. According to Pima lore this web-like design depicts humanity at the gate of a complex labyrinth. The maze or labyrinth is a symbol of "all the experiences and choices we make in our journey through life," according to its official description. It adds: "In the center of the maze, a person finds their dreams and goals."

For dedicated golf instructors who are pushing themselves toward mastery of this fast-changing craft, the journey can at times seem like a maze. However it is also clearly a setting through which dreams and goals are discovered—then pursued with ever-present passion. That was the significance of Proponent Group's three-day Summit 2013 at Talking Stick, a Troon Golf-managed property in Scottsdale, Arizona. Site of Proponent's first-ever Western-based gathering, it proved itself an accommodating and energizing setting for the group's Oct. 27-29 gathering, all the way down to the excellent autumn weather.

The event was sold out, with 125 members on hand to split time between a spacious ballroom and the beautifully maintained Talking Stick practice complex. Our host professional, **Tim Mahoney**, was the first presenter at this Summit's outdoor session, on the afternoon of Day 1. Along with being head of the teaching program at Talking Stick, Mahoney is also director of instruction for Troon Golf corporate-

wide. His presentation to Proponent members was aided by four Mahoney students, whom Tim guided, cajoled, challenged and chided throughout an hour-long four-player lesson that showed this instructor's deep and valuable experience with group instruction. Among the golfers participating in Tim's session, which seemed as much like supervised practice as it did formal instruction, was **Howie Kendrick**, All-Star second baseman with the Los Angeles Angels.

Earlier that day, **Lorin Anderson's** opening remarks had an unmistakable theme.



The Proponent Group president stressed the speeded-up rate of change in teaching and coaching as a business plus the "open-source" flow of data and knowledge—all of which an ambitious golf instructor must stay current on. Lorin and many speakers who followed kept up the drumbeat about the so-called "coaching model," in which both effectiveness and income can track higher if strategy and technique are properly ingrained. Next up, Troon Golf CEO **Dana Garmany** spoke via video due to late-notice Japan trip he had suddenly left on. Garmany told his audience they were a critical link in the new machinery of golfer-attraction and golfer-retention.

The program went quickly into golf equipment and the challenges of short-game coaching, as industry veteran **Terry Koehler** took to the



TOP: Pia Nilsson (left) and Lynn Marriott explained the practical application of their coaching methods. BOTTOM: Members enjoying the opening night dinner.

stage. In what turned out to be a riveting journey through the history and mystery of scoring-club design, Koehler (pronounced KAY-ler) explained how difficult it truly is to train students in the fine art of hitting it close. Founder and CEO of SCOR Golf, a boutique equipment company, Koehler kept his detailed presentation almost completely generic. The unsettling facts of wedge-play performance – and the problems of conventional wedge head design—came through in this heavily illustrated talk. Modern game-improvement design hasn't extended to the high-lofted clubs. Summit-goers found Koehler's presentation to be right in their wheelhouse—fresh data on a previously unexplored topic.

Dr. Rick Jensen was asked to share his advanced expertise on learning systems with Proponent Group members. Under the title of "The New Coaching Model," Jensen's commentary was set up as a panel discussion featuring member instructors **Marvol Barnard, John Dunigan** and **John Perna**. Answering a series of in-depth questions posed by Dr. Rick, the three panelists told colleagues of the uplifting success they had each achieved in just a year or two of following the coach-don't-teach model.

Jensen's basic stages of improvement, for those who are unfamiliar, are

- 1) Understanding cause and effect,
- 2) Engaging in supervised practice,
- 3) Achieving "transfer training" and
- 4) Play.

For her part, Barnard admitted she had been wary because the new

structure seemed too different from what golf instructors usually do. However, she pushed through that and now finds that her evolution is speeding up. Dunigan made a job change simultaneous with adopting the Jensen-Henry Brunton coaching model. Students who followed Dunigan from the previous facility were open to the change of format, which somewhat surprised him. "Instead of pushback,

I get questions about why I haven't done this before," Dunigan commented. What students must first accept is that they will be charged by the month, by the year, and occasionally by the day, instead of by the lesson. According to Jensen, "Part of the training is to understand that your income situation will improve and evolve very acceptably if not more than acceptably.

John Perna, third member of the panel, was the least experienced and perhaps most successful of the three, at least financially. While it should be noted that Perna works almost exclusively with elite juniors, he and others were quick to say that the system works perfectly well with adult golfers. Perna, a mini-tour player who made a fairly abrupt switch to teaching four years ago, has taken his annual income from \$30,000 initially to \$90,000 in the second year and all the way up to his current level of \$250,000. He teaches at Oak Brook G.C. in Oak Brook, Illinois. Perna's newness was an advantage for him, according to Jensen, as it "allowed him to put in this structure more rapidly than a veteran instructor might have been able to."

After a morning break it was time to hear from the two principals of a startup company called



TOP: Ian James of Retail Tribe explained how members can create a stronger selling environment for their lesson programs. **MIDDLE:** Nathan Wojtkiewicz of Swingbyte demonstrates their latest product. **BOTTOM:** Demo Day was very well attended with more than 10 companies participating this year.

Golf Coach Select. Discussing what they titled “A New Business Model for Golf Instruction,” **Scott Novell** and **Todd Wilson** laid out the basics of a concept that golf instruction has not seen before. “This part of the golf industry, instruction, is completely fragmented,” explained Wilson, who like Novell is a CPA by training and a veteran of many years with NASCAR. “As a result there is no actual marketable entity, except in the case of a few marquee names—but that situation can be changed.”

Constrained by pending contractual negotiations from sharing the full extent of their startup’s progress, Novell and Wilson said the “brand within a brand concept” that works for NASCAR speedways will also work well for leading golf academies. While contributing some funds as cost-share investment in marketing programs, the academies in Golf Coach Select can expect to increase revenue beyond those payments, is how the value proposition was basically explained. During 2014 the new firm is expecting to establish 20-some locations and create the first of its sponsorship agreements. Golf Coach Select would not influence teaching styles or methodologies at an individual academy, according to Wilson.

The outdoor session, which began with Tim Mahoney’s group lesson how-to session, continued with a lengthy Vision54 presentation by the famed founders of that company, Proponent Group members **Pia Nilsson** and **Lynn Marriott**. The format was a series of interactions with two professional tour players, **Matt Smith** and **Guilia Molinaro**. Using a problem-solution approach Lynn and Pia discussed with each tour pro the undesired mental and emotional patterns they experience and

the Vision54 techniques that have been developed to alter those patterns so they don’t interfere with strategy, shot-making and scoring. Summit-goers who had heard about the “think box” and “play box” structures used in the Vision54 system got an in-depth illustration of just how valuable the concepts can be. Along the way the two award-winning teachers told of their journey through the maze of old and simplistic ways for dealing with emotion and psychology, en route to a new and sophisticated approach now so widely in use.



TOP: Marvot Barnard, John Dunigan and John Perna formed a panel for Dr. Rick Jensen’s discussion on Coaching program business models. BOTTOM: Terry Koehler of SCOR Golf explains the company’s fresh research on wedge performance that captivated our members.

Day 2 of the 2013 Summit began with **Zach Miller** of Imavex discussing the state of the art of website and social media marketing. Miller’s top fact of the session was that adding video to emails and website home pages “increases interaction by up to 300 percent,” as measured by web analytics. “You need to know which videos are getting viewed, by whom, for how long, and via which devices,” he pointed out. Miller also advised that having a blog incorporated into your homepage is quite effective. “The lowest daily number of click-opens for blog posts for a Proponent Group member is 48,” he said, “while the highest we’ve recorded is 266 per day—that is people clicking into it, and reading the post.”

It’s vital to have the analytics to measure all this activity, Miller told the group, but he also warned that Google was getting stingier with its web analytics data. What once had been free of charge to anyone with a blog is now available only to customers who are on a paid program with Google, such as Google Adwords. Among other advice he offered was the strong suggestion that teaching professionals open up their own accounts with Yelp.com.

An organization that will

be working on a regular basis with Proponent Group in the future, Retail Tribe, was next on the agenda. Retail Tribe CEO **Ian James** began his very engaging talk by stating that golfers don't actually want to buy lessons. "What golfers want to buy is not what you as teachers seem to be selling most of the time," James said. "Rarely are we hearing about the great benefit that is the actual deliverable—the tremendous satisfaction of new golf skills and significantly improved play out on the golf course." Retail Tribe creates online marketing campaigns and content, designed to inspire customers to want to engage with the vendor or business. Though it began working only at a large-scale retail level, Retail Tribe has developed an extensive involvement in the golf industry over the last six years. Reflecting on that experience, James talked about a "10 Yards in 10 Minutes" lesson format he has often shared with clubs and courses that focus on player development. "Golfers have to have a belief in you," James told the teaching pros. "That's the easy part. Then they have to believe in themselves. That's the dynamic moment."

In the segment that followed, **Dr. Debbie Crews** and **Tim Suzor** shared with Proponent Group members the current state of the research into golf performance as a neurological event and hinted at a new software platform that would be available in the near future for widespread application. Their presentation, titled: "Game Your Brain: The Science Behind Cognitive Training," took the audience through an explanation of the "gym for the brain" that well-designed cognitive-feedback systems are capable of providing. Change is possible, Suzor and Crews explained, because new connective tissue in the brain's sectors and hemispheres can be generated if the training is appropriate.

After so many presentations, the next topic on the agenda was the art of presenting. **Mike Malizia**, a Florida-based Proponent Group member with extensive training in the Toastmasters school of public speaking, had audience members alternately smiling and squirming as he carefully showed the pitfalls, traps and crutches of our attempts at formal communication. Malizia, a former PGA Tour player whose day job is running Mike Malizia Golf Performance, provided a long hit list of communications errors and the time-tested methods of avoiding them. "Every 15 to 30 seconds you have to re-engage the listener," Malizia explained, then showed how simple it can be to do that.

Will Robins took to the podium following lunch to tell the story of his new direction into results-oriented coaching. The British-born Robins,

now with two California locations for his system, guarantees results "or we will teach the student for free." The first guideline Robins laid was to "Stop giving the player what he wants, or says he wants, such as 'fix my slice,' and start giving him bigger benefits" such as all-round better golf, more confidence and lower scores. The process favored by Robins involves "pulling the results from the player" in a manner that minimizes the amount of how-to information dispensed. The reported results—as measured in score reduction, referrals and revenue—got the attention of every Summit attendee.

Concluding this year's gathering was a heartfelt talk by the inimitable **Fred Shoemaker**. Many in the audience had read Shoemaker's perennially intriguing book, *Extraordinary Golf: The Art of the Possible*, and quite a few had attended his coaching seminars. He stressed that the "first five minutes of a lesson are crucial and the either build velocity or create muddled confusion." After showing a video of his work with the actor and writer **Michael Tucker** noted that "Golf can be discovered—it doesn't have to be taught." Indeed one breakthrough sequence captured live on the video featuring Tucker proved this contention emphatically.

Judging from the enthusiastic emails and social-media comments of Summit 2013 attendees, presenters made their points with effectiveness and originality. Whether they typed notes, shot photographs or recorded video, the Summit-goers stayed engaged through what may have seemed at times like a labyrinth of new information. It was a strong sign of how strongly the game's best teachers and coaches will push toward mastery of their craft—and success on the business side as well.



Talking Stick host professional and Proponent Group member, Tim Mahoney (left), thoroughly covered the topic of how to coordinate, manage and teach in a group instruction setting.



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The Search for Pricing Power

By David Gould, Staff Editor

It's not a stretch to compare today's highly trained teaching professional to a board-certified physician. Each is more in demand than the average practitioner hanging out a shingle. Does that mean the popular pro, like the medical specialist, can earn premium pay? When they see credentials like TPI certification, Trackman University, Golfing Machine and the like, do consumers understand that a premium fee could reasonably be charged? Likewise, do the awards from major media outlets tip the balance heavily toward an up-charge versus other professionals?

Then again, since word-of-mouth often outsells all other promotion, is a reputation earned via the grapevine a basis for having the highest fee around? We could go on, and ask whether tournament wins on the part of amateur and professional players bring the coach extra pricing power. Likewise with collegiate scholarships awarded to this pro's youth golfers.

Actually, it doesn't matter how the buzz gets created, only that it does. The direct result is that your lesson book is full weeks and months in advance. In classic economic terms, that means an hour of your time is scarce, which makes it rise in value versus an hour of some other teacher's time.

Ah but there's a catch—maybe one or two. Going back to our board-certified physician, it's clear that the doc and golf pro differ. The physician sees a stream of continually changing faces, based on who happens to need a particular type of treatment or surgery. A golf instructor relies on regulars and repeats. His or her loyal customers take lessons over a long period of months or even years. Which means that any rise in fees is a highly visible event and liable to be taken personally by those paying it.

At the 2013 Proponent Group Summit just completed, several presenters pushed back against the traditional training and compensation paradigms. The common theme of their remarks was that sell-

ing time and filling a book with hour lessons was passé, and top coaches eventually would be out of that business. Instead they would design and operate a system for creating measurable improvement that involves technology and staff instructors assisting. Golfers would go through the system, learn skills, become true players and pay handsomely for it.

We aren't there yet, and the road to this new scenario may not be short and straight. One reason golf instruction doesn't easily go up in price is that it sometimes has to go down in price. So notes Kenny Nairn, executive vice president at Celebration Golf Management. When asked about pricing of game-improvement services, Nairn discussed the need to price-promote. "We know our demand patterns, so we've put together value packages and we slot them into the slow times," he says. Generally speaking, that dead spot is 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on weekends, Nairn reports. Celebration's promotional pricing was set at \$25 a golfer for two hours of group teaching and supervised practice, an offering that tends to produce about 12 golfers and calls for two or three instructors to cover it. "We did have other teaching professionals in the market question us about the policy," Nairn says. "They didn't like it."

Proponent Group member Bill Davis of Jupiter Country Club feels he is "already at the max" he can charge, which is \$200 per hour. "This is a matter of relationships," Davis comments. "I have 23 clients who take 40-plus lessons a year. If there weren't that cluster of golfers already writing checks to me for \$8,000 or \$10,000 or more, I would push my rate up to \$300 in a heartbeat." Among the fees on Davis's schedule is a \$1,500 day rate for him to serve as

caddie and coach in a tournament. He looped it 42 rounds in 2013, through October. In discussing his compensation as a coach, Davis makes the point that the flow is not all one way. "If a student of mine wins a tournament, he or she gets three hours back from me at no charge," he says. "I caddied for a student in an NCAA event a while back and gave her that day—includ-



What are you really worth? How do you really decide how much to charge for instruction?

ing four hours travel time round trip—as a Christmas present. You can't be a taker only."

Some golf instructors are playing catch-up based on price levels their facility was at when the new professional arrived. Brian Varsey, a Proponent member who is just finishing up his first year at the Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, Fla., spent those 12 months building a matrix of services and pricing them fairly aggressively. "When I was done the resort sales team was very appreciative," reports Varsey. "They said it was just what they had been needing. It added muscle to the golf program overall, which does attract a good group business. Problem was that instruction and coaching had never been built into the packages."

With the spreadsheet completed, Ocean Reef now has many products defined and delineated, beginning with the 10-minute supervised warm-up session. Fees of all kinds were wallowing at low levels when Varsey arrived. For example, the cost to add a second golfer—usually a spouse—to a previously scheduled private lesson was a mere \$15. "We asked around and learned that most comparable facilities in our market priced that extra golfer at closer to \$50," says Varsey. "We moved our number up to \$40, which, I would say, is progress."

Golf facilities that emphasize player development and new-golfer recruitment often find their business boosted but their rates a bit tinged by Get Golf Ready. For example, when Nairn was hearing it from neighboring courses about promoting "value-priced" instruction, he used Get Golf Ready promo rate of \$99 as a rationale. "It provides you



some cover," says Nairn. "In some instances all we're trying to do is build the base."

Nicole Weller went immediately to the Get Golf Ready platform when asked about changes in costs for instruction at The Landings Club, her base on Skidaway Island, Ga. The standard Get Golf Ready program has four levels, each of which requires a \$99 payment, but The Landings has added a fifth. "Level 1 is pure SNAG," Weller says. "People are totally enthusiastic about it, once they try it." One up-charge her club does levy is a bump from \$99 to \$120 for any

golfer who wants to participate in a GGR level without having completed all the previous levels.

Scott Sedgwick, who runs the entire golf program at Louisville (Ky.) Country Club, has painstakingly been redefining how instruction is bought, sold and paid for at his golf facility. "It's a lot of work explaining this to our clientele," says Sedgwick. "The old way of doing things in instruction is so ingrained." Louisville C.C. members can purchase a \$950 5-pack of golf coaching units or a \$1,500 10-pack. That includes a free professional clubfitting session plus a nine-hole on-course supervised play experience. In these sessions there are multiple golfers, usually on a 5/1 student-teacher ratio or less. It's often said that a new program at a private golf club works if you can sell it first to the influential, gregarious types whose voices are most easily heard. If that's the way to create a groundswell for the switch to a coaching model, Sedgwick says he will have to continue showing patience. "It's more the serious, studious type of member who is catching on to this," Sedgwick observes. "The classic 'influencer' type has not been an early adapter."

SAVE THE DATES

Proponent Group PGA Show Event Schedule

An announcement with the entire Proponent Group January 2014 PGA Merchandise Show schedule in Orlando will be published later this month.

Until then, please note the following on your calendar as you plan for your trip to Orlando.

Additional events also will be announced shortly.



PGA
Merchandise Show

Tuesday, January 21st

Live Lessons hosted at the Mike Bender Golf Academy in Lake Mary, FL

Wednesday, January 22nd

Our traditional mix of seminar sessions all day in our PGA Show meeting room.

Thursday, January 23rd

Marketing Workshop hosted by Retail Tribe

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

The “New Rules” for Golf Instructors



By Lorin Anderson, President

Last week at our Proponent Group Annual Summit I took a few minutes to talk about what I’m seeing and hearing from my unique vantage point within the instruction industry. I have the pleasure of getting to have more than a thousand conversations each year with the game’s top teachers and industry observers. This

gives me the chance to see the trends that are forming usually before most others will spot them.

Last week I talked about nearly a half-dozen growing trends that are going to affect many of our members’ businesses. As you prepare your business for 2014, consider how these shifts in the industry could affect your business sooner rather than later.

New Rule: You Will be Measured

Technology is on the way that will make it possible to measure student satisfaction and improvement in nearly real-time. It will become standard practice to track the improvement of every student you work with and to measure improvement rates for various lesson and coaching programs among your own students and among students from various instructors.

New Rule: Students Want Access 24/7/365

The instruction day, week and season never really ends anymore. With indoor studios, internet lessons and social media, emailed swing videos and texts, there is never a time when at least one student isn’t reaching out for your time and insight. The question will be how do

you set limits that are appropriate for both you and the student.

New Rule: Don’t Join the Club

The best teachers avoid private clubs. Only six of the current Golf Digest Top 50 Teachers in America are based at a private facility. The fact is most private clubs will limit your pricing and your clientele. In many instances, the better you perform at a private club, the more jeopardy your job will be in. Clubs can be great places to start your career, but they may not be aligned with your goals as you grow your teaching brand.

New Rule: Happy “Independents” Day

Being an employee is sooo 20th Century. In the past five years our membership has gone from 60/40 employees to 60/40 independent contractors and the trend looks to continue. Are you making preparations to be on your own? Talk to your accountant about what you need to know before setting up your own company. You may not need to switch this year, but you likely will soon.

New Rule: Visibility Matters

Let’s be honest, the really good teaching jobs rarely get posted. They are filled through the facility’s golf pros’ network of friends and recommendations from friends. To have a shot at these positions, you have to be very visible in your section. Are you attending events where you network with other pros? Are you appearing in regional media? Have you offered to present at section education events? Do the key “influencers” know your capabilities? Be visible in all these ways and you should start showing up on the short list when a top position opens.

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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: SCOR Golf

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The Proponent Group is pleased to announce



that SCOR Golf, of Victoria, Texas has put its full support behind the Proponent community by taking an annual platinum partnership, effective immediately. SCOR's revolutionary SCOR4161 precision scoring clubs represent a complete re-invention of the high-loft end of golfers' sets. The innovative SC3 progressive weighting has been proven by independent testing on Iron Byron to reduce the distance loss of high-face impact by 19-24 feet over the top selling wedges, and delivers pinpoint accuracy, distance control and forgiveness in the "money clubs." SCOR4161 delivers equally impressive technological advantage with the exclusive V-SOLE design, Tru Form Forged process and the company's proprietary line of scoring range shafts branded "GENIUS®".

At the foundation of the entire SCOR technology package is the industry's most comprehensive interchangeable head/shaft scoring club fitting process and system, which is available to all Proponent Group members. The patent pending SCORFit™ process allows you to quickly and precisely help players determine the proper 'prescription' of scoring clubs for their particular game, including the right lofts, shafts and specifications for length, lie angle and grip size. The patent pending SCORFit process is the industry's most detailed application, and the first to reconcile the variances in

specifications between makes and models of irons to allow golfers to arrive at the exact loft matrix and other important specs for their scoring clubs. The constantly-expanding database of irons' specifications already contains almost 500 models of irons from over 40 manufacturers.

SCORFit Lite™ allows golfers, teachers, fitters and retailers to use their smart phone or tablet in a fitting or demo environment to access the SCORFit iron database and prescribe lofts and shafts for any golfer.



SCOR Golf is the first company to offer 21 loft options for the scoring clubs. The company's SCORFit process allows you to quickly and precisely determine the optimal loft matrix for each of your students.

"Very few golfers have the right combination of lofts in their scoring clubs," explains Koehler. "They also are not playing the proper shafts to optimize feel, or specifications to improve their shotmaking in the 'money range'. The SCORFit process and fitting kits helps teachers and fitters guide each golfer to determining his or her best scoring club make-up, while the SCOR4161 package of technologies deliver unmatched performance for golfers of any skill level.

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What I've Learned: Gary Gilchrist

Gary Gilchrist Golf Academy, Howey-in-the-Hills, FL

Interview by David Gould



In a coaching career that's now in its third decade, Gary Gilchrist has been responsible for recruiting, training and developing more top-ranked junior-level golfers than any other coach in the profession. He has run and overseen the coaching of two of the biggest golf academies in the world.

A South Africa native, Gilchrist had the bug to compete at a top tour level but also a strong motivation to understand what's required for competitive success. In his

career, he has coached more than 75 American Junior Golf Association All-Americans and six AJGA Players of the Year. He has coached three U.S. Amateur champions: David Gossett of the U.S.; Colombia's Maria Jose Uribe and Thailand's Virada Nirapathpongporn and four U.S. Junior Girls champions, Paula Creamer, Julieta Granada, Chile's Nicole Perrot and Korea's In-Kyung Kim. The NCAA women's champion Virada Nirapathpongporn of Thailand and the U.S. Public Links champion Michelle Wie also emerged from Gary's system of training.

Gilchrist also teaches many of the game's best professionals and helped Yani Tseng ascend to No. 1 in the world. He also coaches China's first fully exempt LPGA Tour player Shanshan Feng, who when combined with Tseng and Suzann Pettersen, have won a combined six majors since 2007 under Gilchrist's guidance. His PGA Tour players include Sean O' Hair, Charles Howell and D.A. Points.

"I love when my players share their goals and dreams. I get excited by the challenge to help and nurture those aspirations into reality," he explained to Proponent staff editor Dave Gould.

Like a lot of golf professionals you followed a path that began with playing competitively then took a turn toward instruction. Tell us about that.

My decision to pursue teaching wasn't exactly planned out. I was in my home country of South Africa, playing professionally. I had been to America as a university student but returned home and ended up playing the South African Tour for five years into the late 1980s. It was a good experience although I struggled to try and attain my playing goals.

Explain that scenario for us.

I could drive the ball well and

play long irons. That kept me going. One factor working against me was my belief that I had to become a classic pure swinger to play tournament golf successfully. That's what motivated me and I neglected other very important areas of the game. The great players balance their practice and have the ability to focus on the key areas that need improvement. If I focused my attention on my short game, my routine and my mental game, I would have seen much more improvement. Being a perfectionist without a clear plan caused me to become negative towards my game, which impacted my attitude and eroded my confidence over time.

What influences were around you at that time?

David Leadbetter had come down to play the South African Tour and his approach to coaching and teaching was influential even then. People in South Africa knew him as an outstanding instructor through work he had done with Mark McNulty, Nick Price, David Frost, players of that caliber. I studied what he was doing when I got the chance.

What brought you to the U.S.?

I had to do National Service for two years in the Air Force. During this time, my golf improved and I made the South African team. This opened the door for me to go to college in the US. As I said, I had been there in the early 1980s as a college golfer at Texas A&M, which lasted two years. That's when I turned pro and went out on the South African Tour, which lasted 5 years. Every year, I kept my tour card but was not seeing much progress in my game. That's when I returned once again to the US to seek out David Leadbetter's tutelage in 1993.

How did you proceed from that realization?

There I was, standing with my new wife in the Orlando airport with two suitcases and a bag of clubs.

I then spent the next six months practicing, taking lessons and playing the mini tours without much success. The money we brought over was running out. During this time, I was taking lessons with one of David's top coaches Rob Baker.

I ended up talking to Rob about my future plans and he asked me if I would consider teaching as a career.

How would you describe your transition?

This was a very difficult time in my life. My whole childhood was based on becoming a



Gilchrist has been the long-time coach to former world No. 1 Yani Tseng.

world famous golfer. I had put so much time and effort into the game. Now I was going in a different direction starting at the very bottom. It took two years before I finally let go and started teaching and loving every day learning from some of the greatest teachers in the world. Lake Nona was a special place with the best players in the world training there on a regular basis.

Were there other challenges besides just the tasks you had to perform?

My other big stress was due to the fact that I'd made a pretty abrupt decision to give up playing. It had been a big dream of mine and that was hard to let go of. I talk to young people about their dreams all the time. Dreams are important. They guide your life, so we as teachers need to have a lot of sensitivity around that. I make sure the teachers at the Gary Gilchrist Academy never forget that aspect of the student's experience.

When you started with the Leadbetter group, did you feel you had a lot of options and opportunities?

Overall, I would say yes. After two years, I found I was learning at a fast rate. I was the instructor who was actually there assisting David Leadbetter during his one-on-one teaching sessions. That's a rare experience. But the environment for staff instructors was competitive. To even work at the Leadbetter Academy you had to be a pretty special teacher.

What ended up setting you apart?

What happened was we got a visit at the Leadbetter Academy by people from IMG who wanted to make David the brand name for something that would be the golf equivalent of the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy. They invited a few of us to a summer camp for golf they had set up. They felt I was a good fit to get the junior academy started and offered me the Director of Golf position. This ignited a passion in me for junior golf and developing the potential in juniors.

Did it feel like a risk, to go in that direction?

I became excited about the journey because I was able to help young people learn the lessons that I had missed in my own career. The importance of mental and strategy and learning and managing yourself are the keys to achieving your potential. During those early years, I learned from the model they used in tennis and developed into all the areas of coaching: Psychology, fitness and strategy together with the technical side.

At the time a holistic approach wasn't common. For me, it was about being with the athletes on the front line. Instead of teaching a swing, in those early years, I learned how to become a coach, and how to coach the whole person. At my Academy, in Orlando, I believe we have the most integrated approach to training and development that you will find anywhere in the world.

How did you imagine you could build such a thing?

My passion for the game and love for juniors gave me the drive and ambition to create something unique. But I always knew that the secret is having a great team and learning from those

who have gone before. By using the tennis model, I created a systematic approach to training that I still use today at GGGA, and the results speak for themselves.

After you left Leadbetter/IMG you ended working in Hilton Head for the IJGA for a while. Is that when you devised the plan to own and operate your own facility?

My time in Hilton Head was a test for me. I wanted to see if I could challenge the coaches to a new level of excellence and see how far we could motivate the students into realizing their potential. The academy had never won a national title but during my tenure, we won two USGA events and one LPGA major. When IJGA notified me that it was going in a more high-profile direction, I knew that it was time to determine our own destiny. My wife and I decided to leave Hilton Head and move closer to her family in Florida. It was our dream to start an academy that was managed or owned by the people who worked the business every day and loved the game. The plan to open our own facility was just the end result of this dream.

Your location in central Florida is fairly rural but it has some real advantages. Could you talk about the move there?

Yes, we were looking for a facility that really embraced junior golf. We needed a good location that could provide diversity of golf, condo-style housing and was close to a preparatory school. Our current location meets all the criteria. Now we have our own 11-hole training course that has just been completed; 36 holes of golf at Mission Inn and 18 holes at Bella Collina. Our new 17-acre training facility has two full par 4 holes, 4 USGA greens and numerous target greens providing an incredible training experience.

Along with golf amenities you could offer a private schooling opportunity—also an advantage?

Montverde Academy was one of the biggest reasons for locating the Gary Gilchrist Golf Academy in Howey-in-the-Hills. Education and character building are foundations of our program, and we encourage all our students to pursue collegiate careers. Montverde Academy prepares them for this experience as they learn to balance the demands of academics and sport.

And apparently they come to your academy from all over.

Golf is an international game and is growing all over the world, especially in Asia. We have built the Academy through building relationships. All the relationships I have developed in Asia and Latin America have been invaluable in building GGGA and creating an international network.

We currently have students from over 20 countries at GGGA because of this network of coaches, agents and families that have supported us over the years.

This diversity of culture is a tremendous learning experience for our athletes and provides a broader perspective of life that is invaluable as they go on to college.

What you learn about parent-child relationships must be quite an education.

This is a great question because the parents are an important part of the team and it is so essential to be on the same page and working together with the coaching staff.

Children look to their parents for approval and acceptance. When the parents and the GGGGA team are working closely together, it can make all the difference to a child's confidence. For this reason, I believe in including them in the process and educating them on every aspect of their child's development. The more they understand, then the better the team can work.

It is hard to be a parent and a coach and I know this first hand. I encourage parents to let us coach and let them be the parent. This is a fine line and often hard for those who introduced their children to the game.

Providing a healthy balance between freedom and control is the key. By allowing your child the space to learn and grow and find autonomy and identity for themselves, it gives them the tools to be the best they can be.

Now that you have some perspective on how you built the model and calculated costs, revenue, the balance sheet, etc., how do you reflect on that?

The first goal was to have a unique culture and approach, which focuses on caring for the whole person. Once you know and understand the individual, you can more effectively train and develop the athlete.

Our investment in quality in the early years was expensive, there is no doubt about it, but the result is a high standard that we have maintained. I do not believe in cutting corners and in every aspect of our business, we bring excellence.

What is your take on the competence and mindset of young golf instructors these days?

Young instructors are way more knowledgeable today than when I started out. The advantage is they can learn and model the best in the industry and accelerate their learning process. However, there is no better teacher than experience.

Only time and experience will make you a master coach where you have the golf coaching quotient or IQ to be able to give the player exactly what they need. By finding the "IT", which many times is not technical, you will then have the leverage to make a difference.

Are you saying it's easy to say too much and overload the player?

Instruction is one of my main concerns when teaching a student. Players today absorb loads of technical, mental, physical and on course information, on all subjects related to performance. I believe that's why getting a training plan over a period of time gives the student an opportunity to learn in their own time. They can first learn how to practice with a purpose then learn how to play the game and then learn how to win.

That's interesting—the coach has a trove of wisdom but he or she can't empty it out on a player.

That's how it is with the physical technique element. But really the average golf coach or instructor isn't complete in their knowledge—that's why it's a fun job. I'm talking partly about the life-outside-golf aspect. Working with young people provides a full-on education on the pressure a youth feels outside their sport. You can be on the lesson tee with someone whose family is struggling in many ways. You'll work with other students who struggle in the academic environment or have difficulty making friends. They will have trouble preparing mentally for competition.

Any other places where the young instructor goes astray?

The big error, as I see it, is how we unconsciously set limits on the player based on our own limiting beliefs and our model of the world. By improving your emotional intelligence you will be able to create a plan to improve every area of performance.

You then need the discipline and patience to stick with the plan. The two main areas to improve are the player's self-image and confidence. What the player needs is an open mind and a great attitude towards the challenge in front of them.

You can't put all of your own standards and judgments on the player until you know what's on the inside. To win, you have to find a way to simplify what's going on. Henrik Stenson did that and it changed everything for him. Seve Ballesteros, in his prime, was childlike in the way he played—and I say that with utmost admiration. Tiger Woods, to me, was childlike in his approach to winning golf tournaments. His love for winning and performing made him look like fear had no place in his life only pure belief in his ability. It's creativity, and there's a flow to it. Phil Mickelson is that way—it's all about discovery. It beats being analytical out there—that's one lesson you learn working with young players.



The Gary Gilchrist Golf Academy employs 17 golf and fitness coaches and is based minutes from Orlando, FL. The academy recently purchased its own golf course and refurbished it into a large training center.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: SWINGBYTE

Swingbyte Wireless Golf Swing Analyzer: Accurate, Affordable, Convenient Feedback on Mobile Devices

It was described by Golf Digest as one of the “12 Coolest Items” for 2012. The Swingbyte wireless 3D analyzer was subsequently adopted for everyday use by some of golf’s leading teachers. Top-tier coaches who’ve included Swingbyte in their diagnostics and training praise its accuracy and its ease of use.

“Players who are serious about improving are constantly looking for feedback on their swing,” says Proponent member Dr. Jim Suttie, who owns the Jim Suttie Golf Academies at Cog Hill G&CC in Lemont, Ill., and The Club at TwinEagles in Naples, Fla. “Swingbyte helps them know what’s going on with their swing without guessing. To me the convenience, precision and affordability put this product in a league of its own.”

Now in 2013, Swingbyte has unveiled a fully redesigned sensor, Swingbyte 2, and has launched an enhanced mobile app that includes in-app video, auto-trimmed and synchronized to Swingbyte’s 3D swing view and data. The result is golf’s only full 3D swing analysis system that captures accurate body and full swing analytics – right on your mobile device.

About the size of a flash drive and weighing approximately one ounce, Swingbyte 2 attaches easily to the shaft of any golf club (driver through putter) just below the grip. As the club makes contact with the ball, a sensor transmits a 3D digitized version of the swing to Apple and Android devices. Both visual and quantitative data can be studied and archived “in the cloud” for future reference.

With the information Swingbyte provides – clubhead speed, the club’s true plane (from address to impact), face angle relative to swing path, loft and lie at address and impact and angle of attack and tempo – golfers can identify problems and work on their own or with an instructor to correct them and improve faster.

“I don’t give a putting lesson without it,” states Brad Redding, a PGA Master Professional and a GOLF Magazine Top 100 Teacher. Swingbyte complements the technology Brad is already using as Director of Instruction at The Golf Academy at The Members Club at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

“I use high-speed, high-definition video cameras and com-



puter programs. But the neat thing about Swingbyte is that it helps you focus on one aspect of your swing at a time. That makes practice time more productive for students and their instructors,” Redding explains.

Tim O’Neal, a PGA Master Professional and head golf professional at North Shore CC in Chicago, feels the “immediacy” of the Swingbyte feedback helps golfers develop consistency. “When you can see exactly what the club is doing during your swing, and then tee up another ball immediately, you’re going to develop a swing you can repeat and you’re going to get to that point faster.”

Brad Brewer, who is among GOLF Magazine’s Top 100 Teachers in America and owner of the Brad Brewer Golf Academy at the Shingle Creek Golf Club in Orlando, is also a fan. “For someone to be able to make a change in their swing, they need to have a picture in their mind of what that change is going to look like,” Brewer says. “Swingbyte shows you the change, both visually and through the metrics it provides.”

“You can tell a student something all day long, but most people are visual learners,” comments Kevin Weeks, one of Golf Digest’s Top 50 instructors and the PGA Director of Instruction at Cog Hill. “Swingbyte makes it so easy for me to show someone what they’re doing, and that’s when they really do get it.”

In addition to garnering the attention of golf’s leading publica-

tions, Swingbyte was also featured on NBC Sports’ 2012 Equipment Special and was invited to present at teaching summits hosted by Jim Hardy, Hank Haney, and the Illinois PGA Section.

As a supplement to the real-time feedback provided by the Swingbyte app, all swings captured on a golfer’s mobile device will wirelessly upload to an online account that features additional analytics and the ability to share swings. The student or coach sees the data via an online account at my.swingbyte.com.

Swingbyte can be ordered through the company’s website,

www.swingbyte.com, and purchased at more than 1,800 AT&T retail stores across the U.S. Swingbyte retails for \$149; Swingbyte offers a PUD of \$90 to PGA, LPGA, and Proponent Group members. To receive a PUD discount code that you can apply on checkout at Swingbyte.com, please e-mail your name and facility information to proponent@swingbyte.com.



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Scott Dirck, Scott Dirck Golf Academy, Alexandria, MN – Full Member.

Bill Fedder, Druid Hills Golf Club, Atlanta, GA – Associate Member.

Kristine Reese, Vision54, Scottsdale, AZ – Full Member.

Katherine Roberts, Yoga for Golfers, Cave Creek, AZ – Associate Member.

Tiffany Yager, Vision54, Scottsdale, AZ – Full Member.

Gustafson Receives Smith Award

Peggy Gustafson, who teaches at McDowell Mountain G.C. in Scottsdale, AZ, has been named the 2013 Marilynn Smith Service Award from the LPGA. This award is presented to a member who emulates the qualities and spirit of Smith in their promotion of golf, community and charitable involvement, dedication, leadership and the ability to inspire fellow professionals.



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