

COLLABORATE

www.proponent-group.com

Proponent Group Adds American Express Travelink Service to Member Benefits

Proponent Group is pleased to offer a new member benefit and discount program that will

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Member Milestones



PROPONENT GROUP NEWS

We Want to Include Your “Live Lesson” in Our New 24/7 Video Learning Library

Technology continues to allow for new ways to share ideas and teaching techniques that were unavailable just a few years ago. We are now working to build a **Live Lessons Library** in our Members Only Video Archive on our website. Always a very popular feature at our live events, we now will be able to host a gallery of videotaped lessons given by our members so that other members can observe what we expect will be dozens, if not hundreds of lesson videos from teachers from all over the world, many of whom you would never be able to see in person during your entire career.

We have had numerous requests from our members to assemble a library of raw lesson footage that can be accessed by our members to study and learn from other members doing what you all do best: Providing live golf instruction. These will be actual lessons – not presentations to other teachers, but real sessions with real students.

As we all know, this is an industry where you generally teach alone or in a small team and you don't really have many opportunities to watch other teachers ply the trade.

We also know that there is much that can be learned by having the opportunity to watch how other instructors communicate, diagnose and prescribe on their way to im-



Proponent Group is compiling videotaped live lessons given by our members for a “learning library” members will be able to access 24/7.

proving the student's motion.

At this time we're asking each member to send us a digital file of one of your typical lessons to add to the Live Lesson Library.

The video can be up to an hour in length and it can be of a private lesson, golf school or clinic session. NOTE: To include a lesson featuring a junior, we'll need to get a parent to sign a release that allows us to post the lesson on our website. Just let us know if we need to provide a re-

lease.

To participate, all you need to do is send us a digital video file (preferably an MP4) of a lesson by going to **www.hightail.com** and dropping the file in the “**Drag Files Here to Send**” box, then when it prompts you to log in, use: **landerson@proponent-group.com** as the email and **pro123** for the password. In the message box, tell us about the lesson including: Your name, student's age, handicap, how much they practice, known physical limitations and how long you've been working with them, along with any other notes you feel are important. We'll take it from there.

By merging our technology with your videos, we can continue to elevate the learning process for all Proponent Group members.

New Payment Option for Member Renewals: Automatic Monthly Payments

Proponent Group is always working to make membership as easy and cost effective as possible. Effective immediately, we are now able to offer new members and members renewing their annual membership the option of monthly or bi-annual recurring payments. All you'll need to do to switch



to recurring payments is sign a Recurring Payment Authorization Form and we'll switch you to either monthly or semi-annual payments depending upon your preference.

Monthly payments will be debited to your bank account or charged to your credit card on the 15th of the month for those choosing to pay monthly.

Keep a look out for this new option when you receive your annual renewal notice by email.



Create a Product Based on Results. Explain it Clearly. Increase Your Earnings.

By Ian James, CEO, RetailTribe

If your intention is to persuade more golfers to invest in your coaching you need to present them with a meaningful “proposition.”

To do that you must start with a results-driven product. Formulate that product then clearly describe the results it delivers. Now you’ve got a way to sell a lot more coaching programs than you’ve previously been selling.

Teaching professionals tend to be informal and casual about their proposition to the golfer. They put out a vague message about being “available to help you with your game.” Being available isn’t good enough. Being informal isn’t good enough. Having no written proposition doesn’t cut it. Likewise with having a written proposition that nobody sees—it doesn’t help the cause.

Having a written proposition that is the context for all of your communication and coaching activity is a must. You need to make it the foundation of your marketing effort. Here’s a simple objective: By the end of the 2014 season, 50 percent of your target audience will have seen and heard your proposition and had no trouble understanding it or appreciating its value.

Let’s start out with the obvious question: Do you have a proposition that is written down? If you don’t, you are making things tough on your target customer. If you’ve got something close to a proposition but you go around explaining it inconsistently then your potential customer will struggle to remember it and appreciate it.

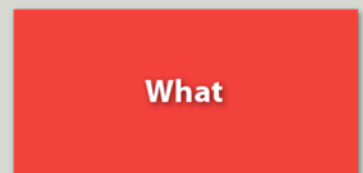
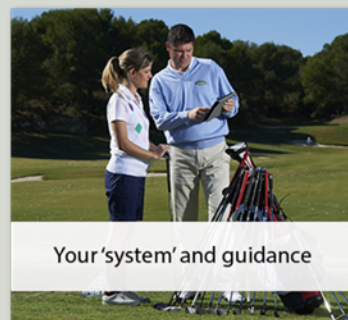
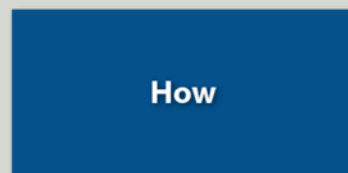
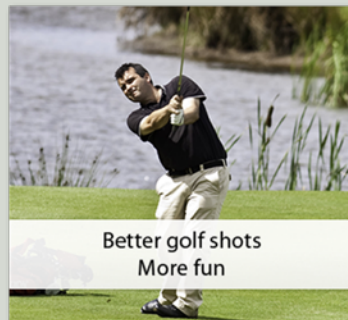
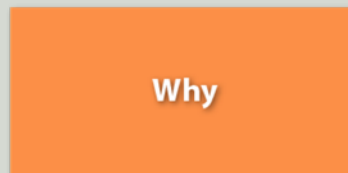
Your proposition should be written down and should be repeated to as many customers as possible through a variety of mediums. First off, it will be spoken by you—over and over. It will be printed on your signage. It will be distributed far and wide via digital communications. Set a goal of hitting every customer and prospect in your universe with this proposition *at least 25 times in the next six months.*

Here’s what to remember about your proposition:

- It should focus on the outcome for the golfer
- That outcome should be something the golfer wants
- The outcome should be something you can deliver
- You – as the professional – should be measuring your own performance against that outcome
- You should be using the same proposition everywhere, over and over.

Don’t get too wrapped up in writing a proposition worthy of a global advertising company. Simply bear in mind that there is a solid structure to good marketing communication.

You should always focus on the ‘why’ and not the ‘what.’ When Apple creates advertising for its iPad, the actual product isn’t talked about. Instead what gets talked about is the ‘why.’ As in, why somebody would purchase



one of these tablets. For example, they would like to learn a new language, or teach a child to spell. Actually, even the ‘how’ of an iPad doesn’t make it into Apple’s ads—only through visual cues do we see the product in action.

Write your own proposition from scratch and then the next step is to publish it. The step after that is to make sure that your network of influencers (facility management, colleagues, other on-site professionals) can also repeat it.

Publish your proposition in your teaching studio, at the range, on the customer’s route to the range, in the locker room, on the club noticeboard, on the front door of the shop, on the home page of your website, along with any

article on improvement that you publish, every time you send out an email to your database.

Do not be modest about your proposition. This isn't hard sell. You're inviting golfers to take advantage of your expertise.

Your business is complicated—it serves two distinct customers

As golf instructors you almost always have two different customers: golfers and facility management. That's an added complication, requiring additional strategy.

You struggle with golf facility management because they lack an understanding of your impact on their revenues – but hey, so do you! If you thought golfers were vague about your proposition, I can assure you that large numbers of general managers I work with cannot connect your role to their business goals. They think you're a "service" that is put to use by a small subset of golfers. These managers wonder about your incentive and motivations. They don't know you have any proposition that is relevant to them.

You're a valuable part of the golf revenue engine. We're struggling with numbers in our industry because too few people appreciate the impact that golf instructors make, or could make if allowed to. So I'm astonished at the results from recent workshops I've conducted. Even golf instructors seem to undervalue the potential of their contribution.

Making more money from coaching

Descriptions of your coaching products should follow the same communication structure as your proposition.

Whatever you think of Get Golf Ready, it represents great product marketing because the title tells the potential customer what they're getting. It's a "why," and it describes a result. It says plainly: *Go through this program and you'll be ready to play golf.*

The pricing of GGR is also clear and simple. It's easy for the customer to decide whether being skilled enough to get out on the golf course is worth the stated price. That's a "value equation." The marketplace responds to value equations.

If a coaching program comes out bearing a name and a partial description without stating an outcome, there is no value equation. It is asking the customer to pay a price without knowing the result they're getting. Golf instructors make this mistake because they define their product in minutes. They sell their time. That's a flawed approach.

Selling a result, and not time, serves the needs of the customer and it also allows you to make more money. Think about a 14-handicap golfer at your facility. What amount of money would he pay for eight lessons spread over four months? Don't answer that. Instead consider what this golfer would pay to have five shots shaved off his handicap by the end of July. He will pay more for the result.

In the former proposition, you're committed to eight one-on-one lessons. In the latter you can include the golfer in a mix of a couple of one-on-one sessions, some group sessions, supervised practice and some on-course learning sessions with two or three other players.

The latter is a win/win for you and the golfer. If you take five shots off the golfer's handicap in such short order, they will feel you have exceeded their expectations. Meanwhile your profit will be increased. Think about all of your products in this way.



Let RetailTribe Make 2014 Your Best Year Ever

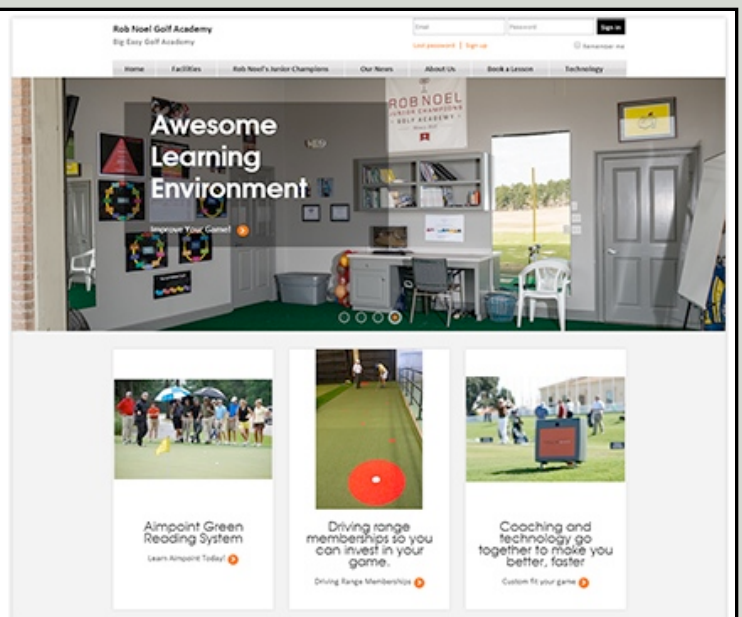


"I cannot believe the results that RetailTribe has achieved for me, my business and my golf club. Shop sales are through the roof and I have more coaching demand than I can manage. Every PGA Professional, golf club or instructor should be using RetailTribe."

-Monte Meyer, PGA Professional, South Hills G.C.

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

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



MEMBER WEBSITE MAKEOVER

Online Leap Forward for Mike Perpich... New Website Serves Both Present and Future

By David Gould, Staff Editor

In the effort to provide a one-stop shop for members who are building their businesses and careers, Proponent Group provides a review and evaluation service covering the member's marketing tools. Naturally it includes that core asset, the business website.

One Proponent member in metro Atlanta, Mike Perpich, made inquiries about a website review in early 2013. His request triggered a process that has led to a complete tear-down and rebuild of the website, mikeperpich.com.

The existing site that Perpich brought to the creative team at 1-2-1 Marketing (and to Proponent Group staffers who collaborated on this renovation) was unappealing and vague, with minimal functionality [See screenshot at right]. It opened with a text greeting that revealed indecision about why the site would exist at all. "The purpose of my website is to provide you with information that hopefully can add to your enjoyment of the game of golf," Mike's message began. It added: "We encourage your input on how we can better serve you by using this website."

It's very important to note that a low-wattage website was not coupled with weak demand for Perpich's services as a coach. "People who know the golf swing will tell you that Mike Perpich is a truly great teacher who is in huge demand and just happens to fly under the radar," commented Proponent Group president Lorin Anderson as the project got underway. "His lesson book fills up at the beginning of every month and stays full." In fact, the new website, under its navigation tab "Book Lessons," still contains the old set of instructions for reserving time. They advise a student to

Mike Perpich's new website (top) is designed to make a world-class instructor feel accessible. His old site (right) struggled to articulate Mike's teaching story.

Welcome to
Mike Perpich Golf

Mike Perpich has been a fixture at RiverPines since 1999. Recognized by GOLF Magazine and Golf Digest as a top U.S. teaching professional, he provides world-class instruction to weekend players and to the game's top competitors from his academy setup at the RiverPines Learning Center.

Among Mike's current stable of students is PGA Tour professional Jason Bohn. A veteran of 20 years on the professional tours, Bohn exceeded the \$10 million mark for his career in 2013. Whether he is coaching tour players or introducing golf to a newcomer, Mike Perpich has the tools and knowledge that are essential to success. Known as a student of the golf swing he is also an expert on short game, putting, mental side and equally so as a student of human nature, he will explain what you need to advance as a golfer and help you celebrate the process of getting better.

Photo Gallery

TOP 50
Kids Coaches

GOLF
TOP 100
TEACHERS
in America

GRAA
2013 TOP 50
GROWTH OF THE GAME
TEACHING
PROFESSIONAL

Welcome to Mike's Website

Welcome to my website. The purpose of my website is to provide you with information that hopefully can add to your enjoyment of the game of golf. We encourage you to browse through our pages to discover what information is available to assist you in this goal. We hope you will browse through the various pages, and we encourage your input on how we can better serve you by using this website. You may email me at:

perpinc@comcast.net

Mission Statement

To Utilize my God given talent to instruct, teach, develop, and communicate to refine the skills of those who want to learn and improve the greatest game of a lifetime.....the game of golf.

Some of my favorite sites

- EyeLine Putting Plane
- The USGA Website
- The PGA Tour
- The GHIN Handicap System
- Golf Online, Golf Magazine
- The LPGA Website
- RiverPines Golf

call in beginning at 7 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month and note that a waiting list gets automatically set up once all slots are filled.

Last summer, as the website project was gaining momentum, Perpich found himself with even less free time than usual, owing to his new commitment to PGA Tour player Jason Bohn. Mike became Bohn's coach in 2013 when the veteran tour pro cold-called Mike to set up a meeting. The results of their work together have been extremely positive, with Bohn racking up prize money and recently climbing to No. 32 on the tour's FedEx Ranking.

A new design, new descriptive text and new photos were needed to get the website project into motion. Proponent staff editor Dave Gould conducted several lengthy interviews with Perpich, while the experts at 1-2-1 Marketing began setting up templates and designs for consideration. "I came into this website redesign knowing that I would be relying on other peoples' expertise, and that's how it went, with what

to me has been a very positive result," Perpich says now. "It would have come together faster if I had been able to spare more time. Even now there are site functions like video lessons and posts describing my work with Jason that I am needing to add."

Mike's photographer, Bob FitzGibbons, is a regular student who worked out a gentleman's agreement involving photo work and golf coaching. Experienced and professional, he produced an extensive lightbox of well-composed, well-lit images showing Mike's operation in detail. As part of Proponent Group's consultation on this project, a two-page memo had been provided prior to the shoot. It was based in part on "Creating a Professional Look: Photo Shoot Tips," an archived article within the Instruction Marketing Guide, found on the member-only Proponent website. The memo to FitzGibbons had additional details specific to the River Pines site and to Perpich's teaching techniques.

The shoot was a success, providing the 1-2-1 design team with a wide array of very good options for what to show in the master shots on the site and also how to represent the full experience of one of Mike's students, from Trackman evaluations of the full swing to putting sessions to wintertime work in the indoor studio. As the ideas coalesced and materials came together, 1-2-1 Market-

ing asked for and received a detailed memo from Proponent explaining in detail all content to be found "above the fold" on the site. These included a master shot of Perpich—two were eventually placed—an "MP" block logo, buttons for Facebook and Twitter, plaques and logos to document his GOLF Magazine and US Kids Golf rankings.

Obviously, decisions about how to populate the main navigation bar—including where on the home page it should be placed—were fundamental to how the site would greet visitors and how it would function as Perpich's principal branding and communications tool. Ultimately, the lineup from left to right showed buttons marked as: Mike's Story / The Learning Center / Video Tips / For New Students / Mike on Tour / Book Lessons / Contact.

As the home page came together, it was determined that it should contain a very prominent live link to "The River Pines Golf Experience" running across the top. This was important given the longstanding partnership and close friendship between this veteran instructor and the owner-operators of the golf facility. The two entities, River Pines and Mike Perpich Golf, are much more than host and tenant, and the website needed to reflect that clearly.

Effectively, the premium space on the home page is split in two directions. One is an opportunity to email Mike directly and start a conversation about your needs or wishes as a student. The other is a portal-style feature that lets a viewer click ahead for photos and descriptions of the learning center. Designers at 1-2-1 used a bright but still casual color palette, favoring sage-and-amber background tones that matched nicely with colors in the two main photographs. The nav bar was set up in a traditional horizontal strip while the fonts used were an angular serif plus a very thin sans-serif for the secondary text.

Admittedly, the "Video Tips" and "Mike on Tour" tabs represented a burst of ambition on the part of the web designers, in effect pushing Perpich to turn away from his loaded lesson book to engage in some brand-extension and self-promo work. "Part of creating a new website is deciding what messages and services you want to provide in the future," says Perpich. "The initial strategy gets followed up with new executions, which is my challenge going forward."

Q&A with Aaron Dyer, PGA, at 1-2-1 Marketing, who helped oversee the Mike Perpich website project.

Aaron, what general impression does the new mikeperpich.com website make on people who visit it?

The message from our viewpoint is that Mike is a world-class instructor accessible to the average player. We feel we created an inviting and approachable image of Mike.

What are its notable strong points?

The website features all of the essential "calls to action" above the fold—top portion—and invites the visitor to learn more. In a tasteful way it highlights Mike's status in his field.

For any instructor contemplating a similar makeover, what preparations are recommended leading up to the actual work?

We recommend first defining your revenue model and target market, including the region and demographics. After that, begin preparing images, testimonials, quick two-minute videos with golf tips, bios, program descriptions, clinic descriptions, and teaching philosophy.

Finally, how does a teaching professional's website that is new in 2014 stay fresh and engaging, in the out years?

It's essential for an instructor or coach to publish regular content such as stories, testimonials, videos, images, and more, uploading all this to the website. Integrate email marketing and social media as much as possible—also, keep the calendars updated and create or maintain online reservation systems. These steps will dramatically improve return visits and customer loyalty.

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Are You Effectively Managing Your Business Risks?



By Lorin Anderson, President

A surprisingly high percentage of the calls we receive at the Proponent Group headquarters revolve around risk management. Usually it's a reactive call because an issue has come up that was unexpected.

"Risk management" is a term that used to be exclusive to the insurance industry.

Now it's used throughout business to gain strategic advantages and handle unforeseen negative events.

Four areas of risk management that often affect our members are: **Contracts, Health Insurance, Market shifts** and **Data loss**. Hedging your risks is critical to a long, prosperous career and a lack of planning in any of the above can seriously damage your personal welfare.

Let me start with one of the riskiest issues I see with Proponent members: A lack of a written contract or Letter of Agreement. In our most recent Compensation Survey, *less than half* of our members reported that they have a written contract. This is simply not acceptable. Facility owners die, go bankrupt or sell their properties all the time. Thousands of courses have changed hands in the past five years. If your facility gets sold and you don't have a written contract that provides notice to you, the new owners can ask you to leave the property immediately. And, many times they will.

We have one well-known teacher in our membership who taught at a private club. When the club was sold, the new owner fired everyone on property the day he took over including our member. However, our member had a smart attorney who had written in a one-year notice clause

into his contract. This enabled him to stay on property until he found a new location and was able to move across town with no interruption or loss of income.

Health Insurance is not just for the old and sick. One-third of Americans will be in a serious car accident at some point in their lifetime. It could be next week. More than one-third of the millions of bankruptcies in America are related to a lack of health insurance. Over the past few years, we've had at least a dozen members drop out because they got walloped by a medical emergency that severely depleted their finances. Do yourself a big favor and get good health insurance no matter what your age.

Market Shifts can be hedged effectively by not becoming too focused on just one type of instruction program. Many of the teachers who were just doing golf schools saw their revenues drop by 50 percent or more after 9/11 and again after the market crash in 2008. The teachers who work with all market segments have more cushion if one part of the market sees a drop off. For example, I fear that the competitive junior coaching market is now saturated and could be ripe for a correction. If that is your entire business model you operate with a higher market risk.

Finally, take full control of your business data. Make sure that you have a complete database of all of your student contact information, detailed marketing files, etc. so that all of your data is in your control at all times. And, make sure you have everything backed up. I'm amazed at how often people still lose their data. There is no excuse for this. You can buy a reliable back-up drive for under \$100 and you can have automated off-site back up of all your data for under \$75 per year. You can't run a business risk free, but you can manage and minimize your risks.

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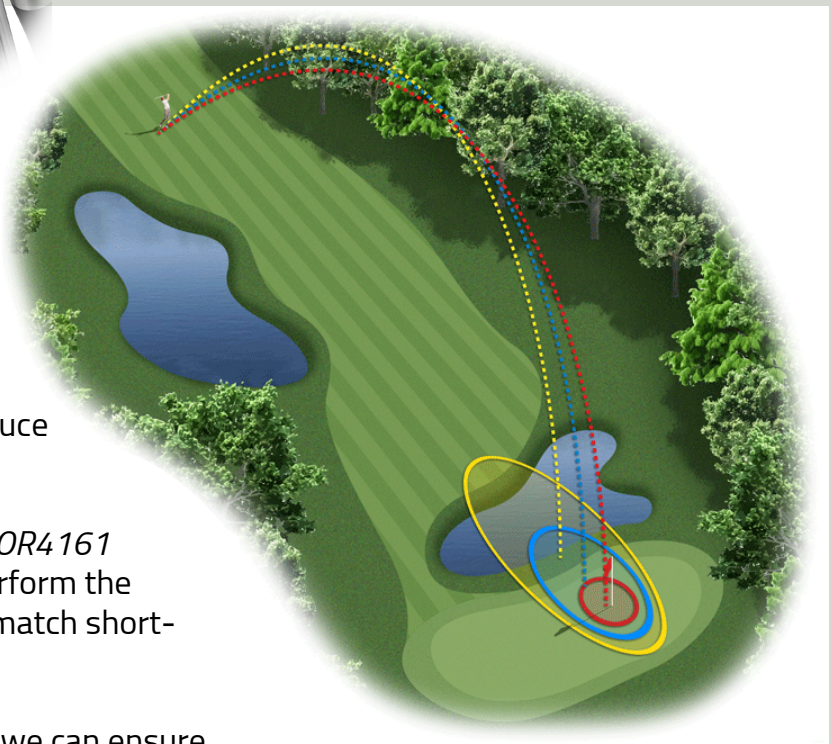
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Have More Fun. Win More Often.**

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**See the Proof
at scorgolf.com**

What I've Learned: Andrew Rice

Berkeley Hall, Bluffton, SC

Interview by Paul Ramee, Jr.



Just as the world-class learning center at Berkeley Hall was opening its doors in 2001, Andrew Rice was joining the club as its director of instruction. For residents of this golf community near Hilton Head, S.C., it was a promising combination of teaching professional and practice complex. A native South African, Rice had played many a match against Retief Goosen and Ernie Els in the junior ranks. Following a stellar NCAA career he took a stab at the touring-pro life, moved

into teaching, worked in the Leadbetter organization and grew in his commitment to being a top instructor.

Andrew's approach has always been a combination of discipline and creative thinking. Diligent enough to make himself a TrackMan Partner as well as a SwingCatalyst Ambassador, he is also the type who will take a step back and ask "why" about any aspect of the craft. Rice ended up writing a book after conducting what he calls his "self-education project" in the fundamentals of impact. That effort yielded information that he felt was otherwise unavailable—thus the book.

It is titled "It's All About Impact – The Winners of Over 100 Majors Prove It!" and it studies the swings of 25 top golfers of the steel-shaft era. On the dust jacket is an endorsement from Nick Price that praises Rice's "dedication and passion to play, teach, and constantly discover the intricacies of our great game." Andrew's two sons are American boys fixated on baseball, which has led their father happily into a youth baseball coaching stint. Some of his fellow Proponent Group members heard Rice present at Live Lessons Day during the recent PGA Show week. For everyone else in the group, his thoughts on a broad range of subjects are gathered here from a recent one-on-one with Paul Ramee.

Andrew, can you talk about your career path and how it led you to where you are today?

I came to America from South Africa in 1987. I had been recruited to play college golf at the University of Central Florida. So, my first four years in the U.S. were spent in Orlando at UCF. We had a top-20 program at the time and I was fortunate to have been selected as a second-team All-American as well as a two-time Academic All-American.

After graduation I played the mini-

tours and went to PGA Tour qualifying school, without much success. I then had an opening to work for David Leadbetter and I took that opportunity. I was on staff of the David Leadbetter Academy for six years, from 1995 until 2001. At that point I moved on to Berkeley Hall, a golf community with two Tom Fazio 18-hole courses. It's located in Bluffton, S.C., not far from Hilton Head. I've been at Berkeley Hall now for almost 15 years.

That's considered one of the great practice facilities.

It certainly deserves that distinction. We worked hard to develop programs and a learning environment to match. We had a lot of success, and then along came 2008 and the economic downfall. In the aftermath of that, I took a look around and told myself it was time to either "step up or step out." In 2009 I wrote a book called "It's All About Impact." The next year in 2010 the TrackMan technology really took off and it help validate the concepts and teachings that are in the book. I've been able to stay on a nice run since then.

What was your most important takeaway from your years at the Leadbetter Academy?

When I went to work for David, I figured this guy is a top-10 teacher in the world. You could make a case that he was No. 1 worldwide. Therefore, he is going to know everything, right? That's what I assumed, but it turned out not to be the case. It was clear that David really kept an open mind. He kept on learning because he didn't think he knew it all. He taught me to think outside the box.

So, you were conscious that achieving success as a golf instructor brings the responsibility to avoid getting too comfortable, right?

That's correct. Which was good, because once we got established at Berkeley Hall—I'd pinpoint the 2005-07 period—revenue came very easy to us. Then the economy cratered, and things on the revenue front were more challenging. I saw the need to bring new energy and ideas to our program.

Writing a book can be a big undertaking. How did you get started on yours?

I wrote the book because I had not seen a lot of work done on impact, and I was personally curious about it. I decided to learn whatever I could about it. Eventually I got to the situation of having a lot of material and not knowing how to present it. I had all these pieces, how could I bring them together? Fortunately, my wife is a great organizer and we put in a lot of late nights.



Rice at work with a Berkeley Hall member.

Putting something on paper—that's how you find out if your ideas really hold water.

It truly is the test. Sitting down to write I found that I could indeed justify my position on the subject of impact and swing mechanics. It really is one of the best things I have done and it supports what I had thought and what I am teaching and it has opened up so many new students. Now with a website, Twitter and Facebook it continues to grow.

What is a typical day at the office like for Andrew Rice?

I still teach one-hour lessons and I typically teach six or seven of them a day. I spend about one hour each day on social media. That effort will tend to generate one new student a week. Most days start with the four of us in the car—my wife and I and our two boys, getting them over to school in the morning.

Have you ever looked into having someone handle your social media communications for you?

I have, and pretty quickly I dropped the idea. That approach seems very commercial to me. I like to have personal control over what is going out.

Talk to me about your mentors.

Well, obviously David Leadbetter really blazed the trail for me. David's style is to push his people not to not take things at face value, to challenge the conventional wisdom.

What are the major differences you see between golf and instruction in South Africa and America?

Junior training in South Africa is more broad-based, I would say. South African kids tend to get out and play and compete. In America the instruction is more on the technical side and lacks an equivalent on-course component.

TrackMan produces a lot of information, how do you pick and choose what to share with the student?

The benefit is that there is as much information as I want and it then becomes my responsibility to share what's important. I like to use the analogy that when I go to my accountant, there are lots of numbers floating around, but it is his job in five minutes or less to relay to me the important information. He has to filter what's there so I have what I need to understand the situation.

So, you are responsible for filtering—is that it?

TrackMan also keeps the golf instructor accountable. If we have a goal to move the club path from -7 to +2, it's up to me to prescribe the drills and coach the player through the change. So I am getting constant feedback as to whether what I am doing is working. In the end, the student must take ownership of the drills. That's another end result that I will be working to make happen.

As data points multiply, can the question of what to prescribe become thorny?

I use the Rubik's Cube analogy. You're making various moves until you succeed in getting one side of the cube to be all one color. Now it's time to work on other side. But in doing so you find that have to break up that first side, the one you thought was all set. That's when you realize how intertwined the entire process is. I compare that to a golf coach using TrackMan. The data is all interrelated and it takes time to learn how the numbers relate to each other.

What do you find that is new and exciting for 2014?

I think the golf industry has a great vibe for 2014 and beyond. There are so many young golf instructors now who are passionate, well-informed and keen to learn more. I see that and I have the sense that we are in great hands going forward.

Are you viewing this period as sort of a golden era, for people coming into the golf coaching field?

It's a dynamic period, that's for sure. Opportunities to learn are everywhere. When I was younger I walked around thinking, "I really have this down." I felt there was not much more for me to learn. Over time I've realized it is just the opposite. You can study and study and you no matter what you won't be able to learn absolutely everything.

What's the solution?

For me it's all about creating a stable of knowledgeable friends. If you do that you can continue to try and learn though attending seminars and clinics and talking within your network. You'll be able to share ideas with people who have a similar passion. At some point you have to choose where you want your streams of



“I use the Rubik's Cube analogy. You're making various moves until you succeed in getting one side of the cube to be all one color. Now it's time to work on other side. But in doing so you find that have to break up that first side, the one you thought was all set. That's when you realize how intertwined the entire process is.” -Andrew Rice

information to come from. I see younger people who have way too many streams. They are all over the place and they have to realize that you cannot be everything to everyone.

Any other advice you may have for these young instructors?

I see them as being very sound with respect to the swing motion, which is a good thing. They still need to study the communications skills of the great instructors. That comes with time if you give it the attention it needs.

How about over the long term—how would you counsel the younger professional?

I would offer this advice: Pick one or two aspects of golf performance that appeal to you and really specialize in those categories. Become an expert on them. I would also suggest that you seek out knowledge and challenge what is widely believed. Listen to the best, take what you like and try to present it in a new way. A bit of guidance I give myself is this: "Try not to be normal." If you can specialize, challenge information and "not be normal" you will be able to differentiate yourself from others.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: TRACKMAN

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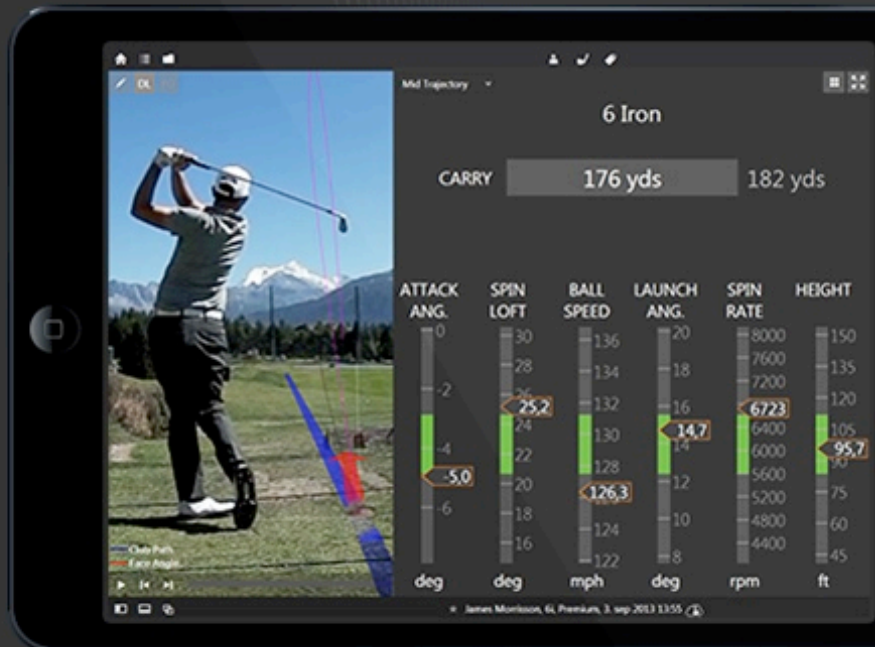
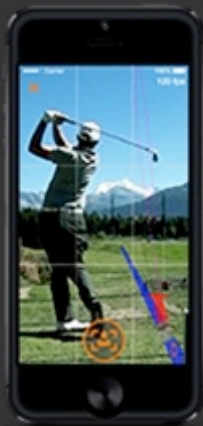
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Advice from Fellow Proponent Instructors...

Time to Create Your Own Branded App?

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Click the icon for the App Store on your iPhone, type "Spearman" into the search box and you'll find the "Mitchell Spearman Golf Shot Fixes" app available for the modest sum of \$4.99 (or lower if there happens to be a special on it). Consumers browsing golf apps in general can also encounter the Spearman app. It's adapted for Android devices, too—again for just \$4.99.

We inhabit a multi-media world—that much is certain. Short-duration video—the golf instructor's friend and natural outlet—is the most desirable form of digital content now available. Therefore the mobile-device app is a logical product for any ambitious golf coach or instructor to create and distribute. But producing and distributing one can be a heavy lift.

Vikki Vanderpool, the Proponent Group member who probably has the most extensive experience building apps, encourages her colleagues to bring realistic projections and thoughtful planning to any app-building effort they undertake. Through her work in the SwingPal organization—including its partnership with Golf Channel and its SwingFix franchise—Vanderpool has been in the trenches helping produce four different mobile apps. Of the four, she is most enthusiastic about one called SwingPal Event Driver, which took all of two weeks to build and is a free download, rather than a for-sale revenue generator.

"Event Driver is an app that supports the work we do at big events recording dozens or even hundreds of individual golf swings, which are then used to generate online lessons paid for by Fidelity Investments or by some other sponsor," says the Nashville-based Vanderpool. "The app solved a major problem. We were wearing ourselves out trying to match attendees' names and correct contact info with the short videos of their swings," she admits. "A process that used to be a real mess is now seamless and basically problem-free."

As someone who confesses to being "terrible with computers," Vanderpool has come far up a learning curve in her years of assisting with app development. However she now notices that learning curve becoming steeper, as consumers and the two major operating systems get more demanding.

"There is so much free content out there these days," she says. "It really should discourage anyone from creating

a golf app just to have an app." There is also the increased challenge of getting approved for distribution through the App Store, given how Apple has instituted tougher testing that helps force a longer wait to get your app into circulation.

"Apple's approval process is longer and more complicated now," says Vanderpool. "That can be especially true if you are trying to distribute an app that is ecommerce-enabled, in order to sell online lessons or some other product." Only on the iOS platform can you do that—Android doesn't even offer the functionality. "And of course Apple is taking 30 percent of your sales revenue off the top on every transaction," she adds. Little-known fact: If your potential customer has an iPhone equipped with wi-fi (or is in a wi-fi hotspot) and exits your app, then goes to your website to place the order for your product directly, Apple has technology that blocks that purchase from their mobile device. "They don't miss much," comments Vanderpool.

Mitchell Spearman's mobile app is a menu-driven content trove of faults-and-fixes video. It allows the curious amateur to select titles from various sub-sections of the app that correspond to various golf skills. Thus, in the Putting Faults section of the app you would find the Proponent Group member tossing such life preservers as "Pulled Putt: Decelerating Stroke" and "Pushed Putt: Face Open at Impact." Each topic is addressed with a short video that gets directly to the cause-effect relationship and demonstrates correct form.

Spearman and his developers created a highly user-friendly menu strip at the bottom of the screen, all done with symbols and single "fault" terms such as "Topped," "Thin," "Fat," "Hook" and several others.

Of course, Spearman's potential to reach an audience and generate buzz is bolstered by extremely high-profile testimonials—from the likes of Nick Faldo, Jim Nantz, Arnold Palmer, Nick O'Hern and Daniel Chopra. He ended up being one of the first professionals to produce an app for the golf instruction market in part because he set himself that goal. "I took it as a challenge," Spearman says. "I was realistic about the time and effort and cost it would require," he says of his production adventure, which took place in the winter of 2009-10.

Mitchell spent a total of \$20,000 to produce "Golf Shot Fixes," hiring a co-writer and a production crew, later incurring studio costs for video editing plus the cost of building

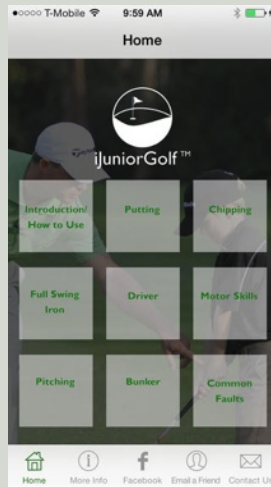


Spearman's Golf Shot Fixes

the finished product as an app. “It ended up being a good investment in every way,” Spearman says. “My ROI financially is probably close to 300 percent. Plus, it opened up other opportunities.” He felt pretty confident that the decision to dive in would pay dividends, but remained aware of the risk. He knew that a weak final product would create a bad impression and weaken his brand, so Spearman stayed on top of the details throughout his planning and production effort.

Proponent Group member Nick Kumpis, like Spearman, also set out to achieve a “first.” Kumpis, based at Santa Ana Country Club in California’s Orange County, was intent on creating the very first junior golf instruction app for iPhone or iPad. Based on his recognition as a U.S. Kids Master Kids Teacher and a U.S. Kids Top 50 Kids Instructor from 2008 to 2010, Nick’s expertise is duly proven. One element distinguishing this app is its presentation style. “Because kids absorb information differently than adults, this app helps them learn visually and improve quickly with fun drills, games and trick shots,” Kumpis states in his product description. “We purposely avoid technical golf-speak, which can be difficult to understand and leads to boredom.”

This app addresses the scenario of the busy parent who is at the golf facility with their young and suddenly golf-



Kumpis' iJunior Golf

enthused son or daughter, in need of information to help guide the child along. “We give parents a game plan when it comes to helping their kids,” Kumpis explains. The value of the iJuniorGolf app, he says, is in “putting over 100 video lessons in the palm of the parent’s hand.” These are short lessons that allow the parent to be consistent and not overload the youngster with ideas and reminders. “Each lesson provides the parent with specific focus, so the junior can work on one thing at a time,” Kumpis says.

“One of the coolest things has been tracking sales,” says Kumpis. “I’ve had sales in Africa, Japan, Philippines, United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, Netherlands, Denmark and Canada.”

His iJuniorGolf app has diagnostic sections addressing common faults and explaining the motor skills that underlie good swing motion.

To produce the short videos that are packed into the app, Kumpis enlisted the help of fellow golf professional Tommy D’Eliscu, who has training in photography and filmmaking. D’Eliscu was a valuable ally for Kumpis—someone who could cover the technical elements of lighting and camera angles while keeping one eye on the golf-specific requirements. Filming was accomplished in four days, according to Kumpis, after a couple of months

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Jensen-Brunton App is “Pro Only,” for Testing Mental-Side Flaws

Tech-savvy Americans who watched the Winter Olympics were able to enrich their viewing experience using an app called “Prime Time Companion.” Its designer is a Toronto software developer, Sean Culhane, whose 12-year-old son is a longtime student in the junior programs of Proponent member Henry Brunton. Working with Brunton and Dr. Rick Jensen, Culhane recently produced an unusual mobile-device app—one that isn’t destined to sell big on iTunes and in fact requires a golf coach trained in the specific teaching to administer and oversee its use. (That’s in sharp contrast to Prime Time Companion, which served a massive audience—“up to 300,000 users hitting the app server every 60 seconds”—Culhane says.)

At a fixed cost of \$10,000, Culhane took a unit of Jensen and Brunton’s questionnaire-based content and converted it to an app platform. Its current working title is “Dr. Rick Jensen’s Coaching Golf’s Mental Skills.” The material adds up to a diagnosis plus drills and exercises dealing with weak links in a tournament golfer’s emotional and mental patterns. It will be available for purchase by consumers in a trun-

cated form. “Dr. Rick and Henry aren’t trying to promote this and sell it online to golfers,” says Culhane. “Important parts of it are password-protected, blocking everyone except the golf coaches who have gone through the training and are able to interpret the results and set up corrective protocols.” Culhane’s son took the test “and said it was bang-on in terms of how his head gets in the way of competing at an optimal level,” reports the developer-dad.

A group of 17 golf coaches recently went through a test phase of the material in Port St. Lucie, Fla., including Mike Bender Golf Academy Director of Instruction Cheryl Anderson. Anderson came away hugely impressed with the quality of the material and, of course, the convenience factor of having it contained in the form of an iPhone app. “They’ve come up with a pretty amazing coaching tool,”

says Anderson. “Within a week after I got back from the seminar I was using the test results and the drills to give some of the most effective lessons I’ve ever given. They were less about physical technique and much more about performance and scoring.”

The conclusion: Getting inside the golfer’s head and programming it for better golf performance—they’ve now got an app for that, too.



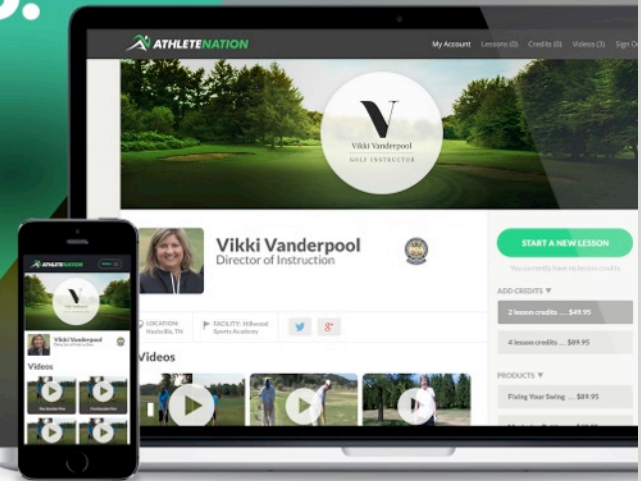
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MEMBER MILESTONES

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Brice Busse, Woodmont Country Club, Rockville, MD - Associate Member

Karen Davies, Tathata Golf Center, Carefree, AZ - Full Member

Alan Fletcher, Girton Golf Club, Cambridge, UK - Associate Member

Jeff Goble, Fox Hills Learning Center, Plymouth, MI - Full Member

Kim Grant, Heritage Bay Golf & Country Club, Naples, FL - Full Member

Bryan Hepler, Tathata Golf Center, Scottsdale, AZ - Full Member

Stephan Kostelecky, Chenal Country Club, Little Rock, AR - Associate Member

Joe Ostroski, Golf & Body, New York, NY - Associate Member

Donald Peterson, Steel Canyon Golf Club, Sandy Springs, GA - Full Member

Chance Scheffing, Chelsea Piers Golf Academy, New York, NY - Full Member

LeBaron Named Director of Instruction at Knollwood (IL)

Shane LeBaron has been named the new Director of Instruction at Knollwood C.C. in Skokie, IL. He was most recently at Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park, AZ.



Sellers Named Director of Instruction at Woodmont

Trillium Sellers has been named the new Director of Instruction at Woodmont C.C. in Rockville, MD. She was most recently the Teaching Professional at Chevy Chase Club in Chevy Chase, MD.



Erdmann Named Director of Instruction at Knollwood (IN)

Matthew Erdmann, who has been teaching at StoneWater C.C. in Grand Rapids, MI, earns his first Director of Instruction position at Knollwood C.C. in Granger, IN.

York Named Kentucky PGA Section Teacher of the Year

Tyrus York was named the 2104 Kentucky Section Teacher of the Year. York teaches at High Performance Golf Academy in Nicholasville, KY.

"Apps" continued from page 13

spent planning and preparing. Kumpis and D'Eliscu shared the task of video editing, a process that eats up time and requires much patience.

It is commonly said that you must invest the dollars your app requires in order to make a good impression. However, in the case of Proponent Group member Keith Handler, there was a chance to create an app at basically zero out-of-pocket expense. Back in January of 2013, Handler met with representatives of a company called Appetise, which was looking for golf professionals to work with as it branched out of the golf-course app category into instruction.

Handler, who was based in Florida at the time his app got built, now teaches at the well-regarded Sterling Farms public course in Stamford, Conn. "The app branded me only, not Sterling Farms, so it isn't all that relevant now," says Handler, a 27-year-old instructor whose area of specialty is putting instruction and green-reading via the AimPoint platform. "I think the Appetise guys created their entire instruction-app template from scratch when they produced my app," he says. "They couldn't have been better to work with, especially given that I wasn't paying them." What's interesting about Keith's experience is the issue of personal brand-building. Early in one's career, that effort may have to happen on a more restrained and discreet level, which would make the splash effect of a self-branding app less desirable.

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