

CREATE 'PRODUCTS,' MARKET THOSE PRODUCTS, SELL THOSE PRODUCTS

by Ian James,
RetailTribe CEO

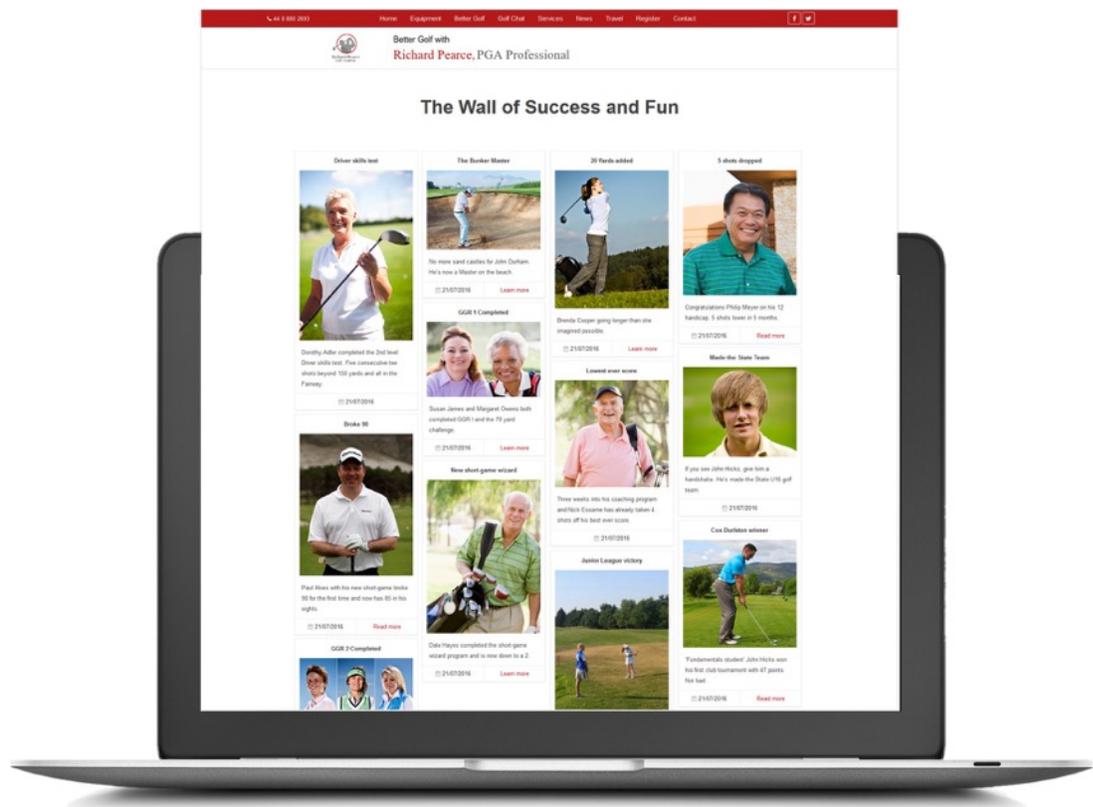
The strategizing is complete and a plan is in place—to make 2017 your best year ever.

So let's pick up on the discussion from last month's column, where we talked about a teaching professional's "success wall" and its power as a marketing tool. The first point to grasp is how willingly golfers participate in the creation of such a wall—how much they enjoy the process. These students are proud of what they've achieved, and they are rightfully proud to call you their golf coach.

The success wall, and the messages the teaching pro posts on it through the early part of next year, will fulfill two important marketing functions. The first is to clearly highlight the teacher's core proposition—that he or she is a bona fide game-changer. Secondly, it will show that a diverse array of golfers has benefitted from that coach's expertise. Just go light on the expertise part and heavy on the impact that's been made on the golfer. As a nice bonus, each post will also be an inspiration to anyone who spends a bit of time looking at the wall.

Inspiration is a very good thing, particularly given how it can open the door for contact and engagement. This won't happen on its own, however, which brings us to the part of the plan that calls for some off-season effort on the coach's part. It should start with you taking a close look at the portfolio of "products" you offer for sale to the customer. I encourage you to create a number of standard products that will strongly appeal to golfers—tipping them over the edge from "This is a great post about John or Mary improving their golf" to "I want to invest in coaching right now!"

Virtually every golf coach RetailTribe sits down with has a variation on the following product portfolio:



The success wall, and the messages the teaching pro posts on it, will fulfill two important marketing functions.

- Introductory golf programs (e.g., Get Golf Ready)
- Standard lessons, with a volume-discount option
- Playing lessons

Many, many golf coaches make a fine living selling these bare-bones products. They enjoy very good turnout for their introductory programs and they teach a good number of regulars in one-on-one lessons. So, any criticism of the above product portfolio may seem unfounded. But, in my opinion, even the list itself contains some clues as to how we could improve it.

Get Golf Ready is a product designed to appeal to the consumer, probably a very specific consumer, as well. It seems to effectively target females who seek help clearing the hurdles to participation, because they long to experience the social enjoyment they believe golf will deliver.

The design of the product also encourages higher hourly yield for the golf coach, insofar as it gathers multiple students in group sessions. The lessons someone receives when they pay their Get Golf Ready fee are part of the product. The lessons are not the product themselves. The product is very

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clearly “about her.”

We should have more products like this.

Let’s look at the three golfers below and think about products that might strongly appeal to them.

Each of the golfers pictured has different needs in mind, yet the only product you offer them is “a lesson.” The lesson is *your* component or commodity. It’s your service. It’s actually about you.

Meanwhile, what **John Avon** needs is a product called “Break 85 Every Time.” And, by the way, it doesn’t matter whether you get John to that goal in two lessons or five lessons, the value to him is the same. In fact, I suspect the value would be greater if you could get him there quicker.

Ian Rose, poor fellow, rarely gets to enjoy his round of golf—too much ball-searching in the woods and heavy rough. Ian needs “Longer and Straighter off the Tee.” **Sally Bonnell**, meanwhile, needs a product we call “Master of the Short Game.”



Get Golf Ready is a product designed to a very specific consumer.

If John Avon saw a post about a golfer previously shooting in the low 80s at the end of 2016, after taking part in your “Break 85” program, the recognition that a fellow golfer had achieved that goal would appeal directly to him. He would be much more likely to respond to the call-to-action in the post.

“Break 85” is a product about John and his golf experience—current and future.

In your down time, formulate a list of products that would likely appeal to the golfers you’re targeting. For each product, describe the target golfer and the skill level they’ll leave the program with. We know from working with our client professionals that this approach is alien to many golf coaches. It seems easier to say I’ll treat each customer as an individual and develop a personal improvement plan (as you should), but there’s a marketing and yield element to look at here. Your products need to appeal to a customer and tip them from inspiration and inclination to action and purchase.

It’s worth noting, with some emphasis, that a portfolio of such products will take a coach beyond the simple equation of selling his time at a rate of X dollars per hour. The products are a means of converting perceived customer value into income. They have the same potential for improved yield that Get Golf Ready presents you with.

Even if you start every customer engagement with an assessment, you still need these products because of how valuable it is to be discussing

Thinking through the golfer’s requirements



John Avon

Mid 40’s, plays golf at different public tracks every week with the same group of buddies. Very good racquet sports player. Never had a lesson but still manages to go low 80’s most times, but without a sound platform usually hits low 90’s.



Ian Rose

Early 50’s golfer who’s played for 30+ years, playing off an 18 handicap. Taught by his father. Sometimes wonders whether it’s worth to keep going. Leaves his partners on almost every hole looking for his ball in the rough on the right and feels a little inferior as they’re all longer than he is, even his older partners.



Sally Bonnell

A good golfer. Longer than most women off the tee, and puts it in the fairway. Her approach shots are consistently up around the green. She’s shooting low 80’s most rounds but could get to single figures if she could get up and down more often.

Each of the golfers pictured below has different needs in mind, yet the only product you offer them is a lesson. The lesson is your component or commodity. It’s your service. It’s actually about you.

needs in specific, inspiring terms that go beyond that old, well-worn term, “golf lessons.”

Furthermore, the “products approach” in and of itself creates an image of progress down a path—whereas “lessons” only depicts the path, itself. If you’re able to say that you have lead a number of golfers successfully through a “Longer and Straighter” program, that gets the person to whom you say it envisioning a proven path of progress.

Don’t forget that progress along any path can be marked in milestones and new plateaus. By introducing names and tags for these milestones, you are able to identify a skill level reached and inspire those who’ve reached it with the opportunity to climb to yet another level—just the way they do it in martial arts and computer games. Thus, you could tell the golfer, “Your short game is now at our Graduate Level. You’re getting down in three consistently inside of 50 yards. But if we can take you through our Master of the Short-Game Level, you’ll be getting it up and down from a variety of lies around the green more frequently—which is an important step for anyone interested in a single-digit handicap.”

Some short-game products



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Compare that conversation, and its value to the customer, to a simple offer of “six short-game lessons for the price of four.” One is specific and goal-defined, the other is vague and without any particular promise of achievement. Think back to your “success wall” and structure products that contain a success story, built right into each product name. **PG**

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