

Results-Oriented Marketing Driving New Business

By Ian James, CEO,
Retail Tribe

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



Great PR for a Savvy Golf Coach

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

Why did I love this written account so much?

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

While there isn't a specific product being trumpeted in the article, Scott has presented the largest market group of golfers with a pathway to better golf. Engage with Scott and, for the regular golfer, there's the promise of more fairways hit, more approach shots attacking pins and more pars and birdies.

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



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

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

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

You Create More Rounds and Revenue

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

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

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

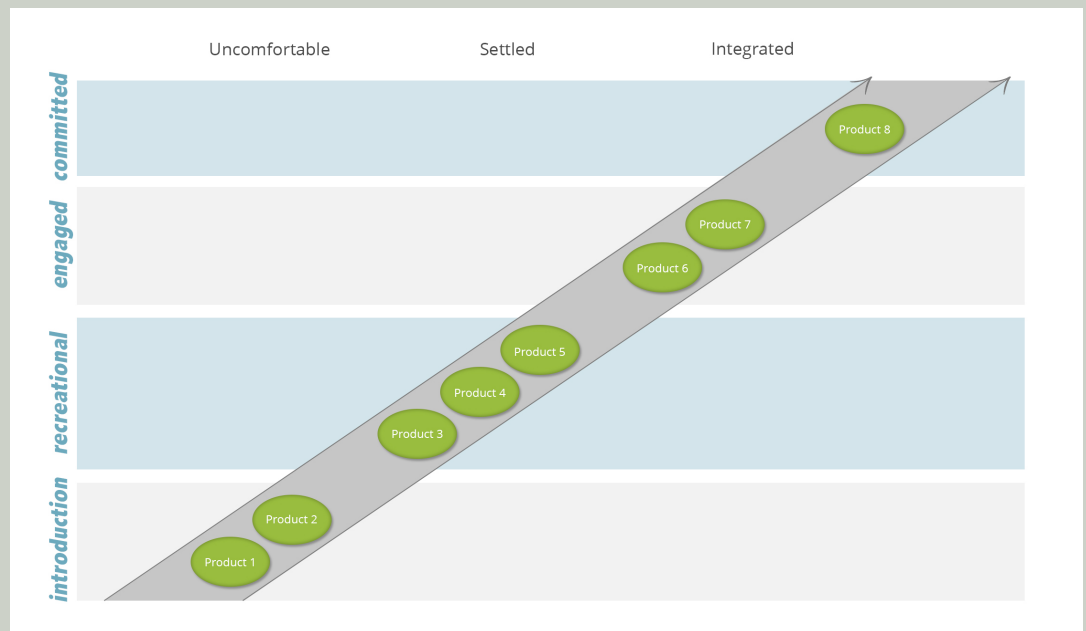
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Create Products These Golfers will Respond To

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

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

Most coaches seem to think



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

Proponent Successes

World-class marketing in less time is worth over \$12,000 just in time

"I consider myself a top quality golf coach and that's what I need to spend my time doing" says Paul Kaster, the recently appointed Director of Instruction at Forsgate Country Club, NJ. "The less time I'm in the office, the better it is for my club and my golfers. Over this summer season RetailTribe will not only help me to continue to grow my business, they'll save me the time to create an additional \$ 12,960 worth of revenue".

There are many email or web Marketing solutions on the market. They all provide some sort of template choice. The Professional still has to do the hard work of adding the content and keeping it updated. When we started RetailTribe 8 years ago, our mission wasn't to design templates for email or web sites, it was to create the 'content', the 'online conversations', and the 'marketing campaigns' to inspire golfers to want to improve and to talk to their 'expert' PGA Professional.

We also recognized that, for an 'expert', their time is money. We therefore built a service that allows the PGA Professional to spend more of their time with customers (and their family at the end of the day) rather than sitting at their computer screen.



Paul Kaster

Paul also endorses the quality of content produced: "The look and feel of the RetailTribe content is high-class. It is clean and professional.

Everything they produce attempts to stimulate the golfer to talk to me about improving their game. That's exactly what a golf coach needs."

"And just as importantly RetailTribe has improved my marketing while saving me 9 hours of time per week. That is gold for a golf coach in the summer. If you're looking to grow your business this summer, don't wait. Contact RetailTribe". – **Paul Kaster**, Director of Instruction, Forsgate Country Club.



"Selling the Result Really Works"

"Rick (a RetailTribe Campaign Manager) told me to run a 30-yard pitch shot challenge for three hours. I sold more wedges in three hours than I'd sold in the previous three months. And guess what? I also sold coaching programs.

Then he encouraged me to run a "Speed Challenge" for three hours. I sold over \$5,000 of merchandise in those three hours, with more in the week after. Selling the result really works." – **Bill Abrams**, PGA Professional, Balmoral Woods

Bill is another PGA professional who has embraced "Better Golf as a Merchandising Strategy."

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

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

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

As Well as Products, You Need Events for Golfers

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

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

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



Dee Forsberg

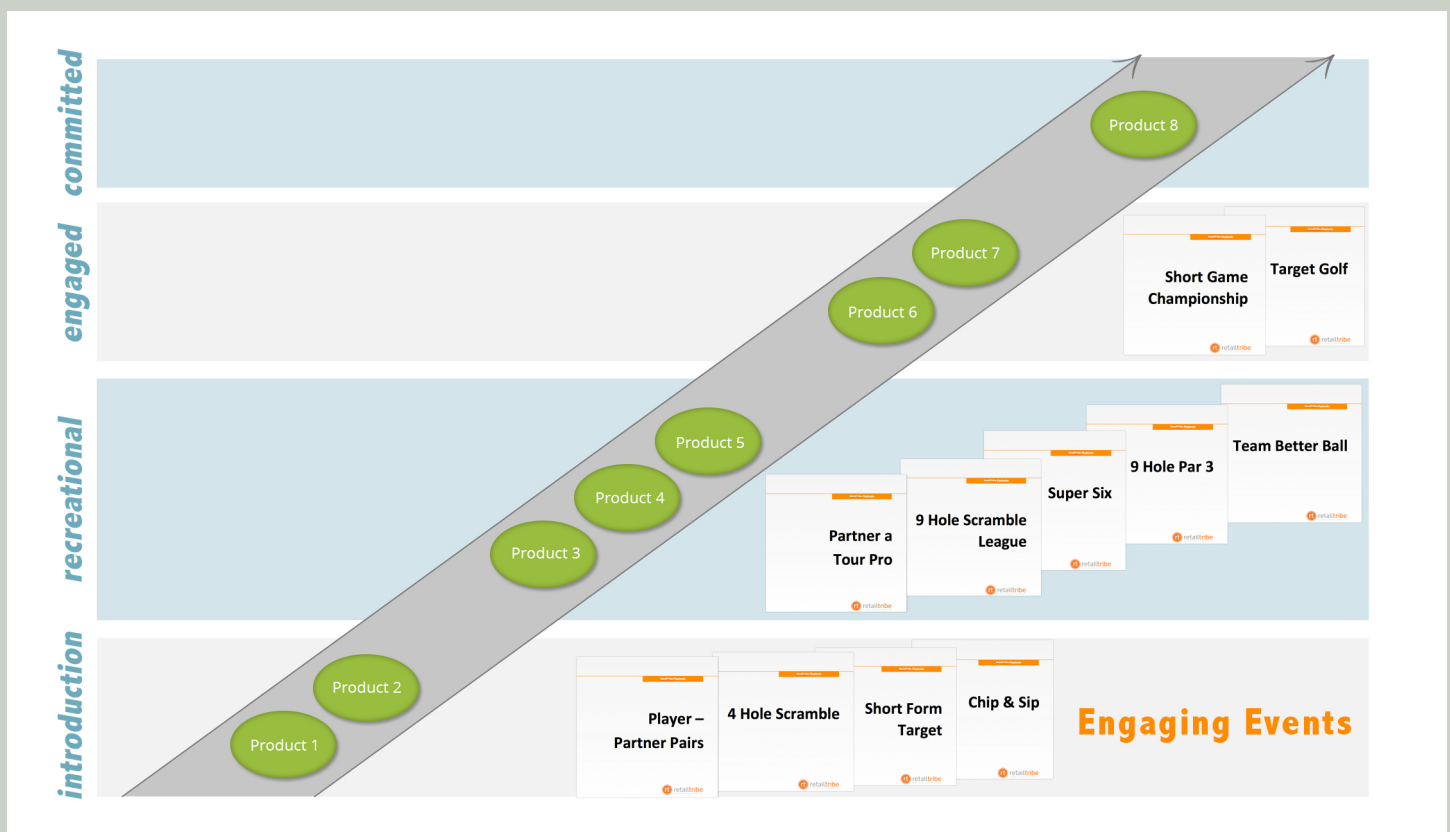
Dee Forsberg, my second shout-out in this article, creates games that learners can enjoy. They might not be playing 18-hole stroke play from the back tees, but they’re having fun taking on a challenge they can handle.

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

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

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

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



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