

# You Can Have Fun Inventing New Products

By Ian James, CEO, Retail Tribe

The person who put the Get Golf Ready product together based their product design on what they thought the consumer wanted to buy.

So that you can ponder it a while, I have left that thought deliberately hanging. In this article I want to have fun and consider what our shop signage and web pages would look like if we embraced that philosophy. To look at things from a golfer/consumer perspective, ask yourself this question: What percentage of my golfers who have been playing the game for more than three years took a lesson, attended a clinic or invested in any sort of coaching program in the last year? Unless your situation is unusual, that percentage will be small.

So, back to our Get Golf Ready example. Yes, of course the product designer knew what they had at their disposal: a PGA professional's coaching skills plus great knowledge of many, many aspects of the game. They knew they could bake all of that together to create a product. But they didn't start their product design there. They started with consumer research and identified a need on the part of con-

sumers—to learn what they would have to do to get to the point where they could actually go and make a reasonable attempt to play the game. Simple. Sensible.

With that in mind, I went to golf professional and coach websites looking for 'stuff I would want to buy. I'm a 13-handicap golfer. I know I could be a low single-digit player (honest!). Question: Where's the product for me?

Look at your website and see what you have "in stock." Is there a product with a title I could quickly identify and latch onto? On the many sites I looked at, there was not.

So I started thinking about results I might want to buy. Here's my quick list:

- Up-and-down in 2, sometimes, from the greenside bunker--but always in 3 or less
- Sink more good birdie opportunities and make more par saves
- A ball-flight with a Draw, not Fade or Slice
- Pitch shots on the money more often
- Playing my second from the fairway more often
- Hit more greens with short-iron approach shots
- Of course you could offer me the big one: Break 85 every time. (See illustration below.)

**How would you like to break 85 every time?**

If you're struggling with scores above 90 and even 95 then we have an improvement program designed to give you the skills to break 85 every time you go out on the course.

The cost to you is \$480 paid up-front or \$150 a month for 4 months.

If you're interested in learning more, scroll down to see how we get you to the point where you are threatening to get into single figures.

Or you can take the decision now and [contact me](#) and we can plan to get started.

**Included in the Program**

- ▶ Personal Assessment
- ▶ Monthly video analysis
- ▶ One on one coaching

This program will focus on five areas of improvement.

**Longer down the Fairway more often**  
First we'll be looking to make sure you find the fairway more often from the tee box with added yards to make sure you have shorter second shots. Playing your second off the short grass means your game becomes instantly more enjoyable.

**Finding the green with short iron approach shots**  
Getting close to single figures from a 18 - 24 handicap means knowing that your #9, #8 and even #7 Irons are going to consistently find the green more often.

**Becoming a master of recovery**  
We all miss greens and find bunkers. It's making sure we get down in 3 or less that protects the scorecard.

**Removing 3-putts and sinking more 12-footers**  
Most scorecards are hampered by 35+ putts. Learning how to read a putt, especially for distance and then how to miss will remove 3-putts. Along with a stroke that gives you more chance in the 5 - 15 foot range, this will drop the putts per round, and your score.

**Making better decisions**  
Golf is about opportunity and risk management. Jack Nicklaus once said he'd take 5 shots off a golfer's handicap if he did the thinking for them. Let's equip you with those skills.

...scores are in the 87 - 95 bracket then let's start a journey to better golf together. Let's ... and a lot less frustration on the golf course. There's ... than taking this journey.

**Better Golf in 2014**  
Contact us [▶](#)

Funny, after I had made my list, I looked at several of the magazines. Turns out their cover blurbs are offering those results or similar. GOLF Magazine promised me I could break 85 every time. It also screamed that it could fix my slice and give me Graeme McDowell's short-game. Those are all results I have interest in. That made me get out the last 12 issues of GOLF Magazine and count the number of 'products' offered. I counted 32 non-duplicated (curing a slice is a pretty common offer) products.

Now I'm not the expert on what golfers want. You are. So, why don't you stop a moment and see how your knowledge improves my list. Forget new and beginner golfers for a moment. Break your market into what you think are relevant performance categories. I've been trained to think in threes as manageable, so I'd go to Low Handicap (6 and under); Improving (7 to 15 handicap) and Inconsistent (16 and above). For each group, make a list of what results you think would interest golfers. Invent your "products." Take just one group and consider what you think the target golfer might pay for the results you are marketing.

I tested this thought process on a golfer about to buy a \$499 Driver (from Golfsmith). This is a person with very good hand-eye coordination, who already plays a racquet sport at a high level. He shoots between 76 and 92 every weekend. He knows he should be under 80 every time.

I asked him why he wasn't going to get coaching rather than spend the \$499 on the hope that a new driver was a step towards better golf. We eventually narrowed it down to his sense of the dollar investment it would require. He wasn't sure what it would take to get from where he was to sub-80 every time. Therefore he couldn't estimate a price to compare to the value he placed on that result.

Interestingly, the sticker on that driver had created a "price anchor" in his mind. He knew he was ready to invest at least \$499, so now it was a question of how much more he might spend. But he's not having to make that judgment because no one's offering a coaching/training product to golfers of his standard—if they were it would be along the lines of "Break 85 every time for \$899".

I'm sure you have already worked out where I'm going with this. We pursue this approach as much as possible. We have a teacher who "invents" a new product every month and makes a limited offer. Whatever result he's offering, the first five golfers to respond get the product.

The result he offers catches the eye of his target golfers. The fact that he can only "manage" five golfers often creates more demand than supply, and we all know how important that is to pricing and margins.

Next month I'm going to expand this thinking and show you how to create a variety of short-game products.

## Proponent Success

### Golfers Respond to 'Coaching Product' Offers

Paul Kaster, Proponent Group member and an instructor at Royce Brook Academy of Golf in Hillsborough, N.J., has started to embrace the philosophy that he can create and promote limited-space products that are linked to a specific skill and competency.

In his second week with RetailTribe he put together and promoted a half-day school to build awareness of the Royce Brook Academy and Royce Brook Golf Club to his local market. He secured his six students and \$1,620 for half a day's work.

"I have never been this busy in Fall. Not only does the RetailTribe marketing solution allow me to reach out to golfers more easily, but Rick, my RetailTribe Campaign Manager, is full of great ideas on how to grow my engagement with more golfers." – **Paul Kaster**, PGA Professional, Royce Brook Academy of Golf



Paul Kaster

### "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 with the new PING G30 metalwood. 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." In fact, Bill now adds his own ideas to our library of "Playbooks." But guess where the best ideas always come from? That's correct—once a golf professional starts thinking in this way, dozens of good ideas on how to sell the result will come forth. Our staff will struggle to keep up with you.

Meanwhile, in his comment above Abrams is being modest. The 30-yard charity pitch-shot challenge was actually his idea. And he's already got a lot more to follow.

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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