

Strategizing 2016: Engage, Inspire, Sell

By Ian James, CEO, RetailTribе

If your goal for the year ahead is to generate record revenues for your teaching practice—even as you build stronger relations with your facility management, we'd like to give you a pair of simple, straightforward areas to focus on.

The source of them is a well-regarded software services company, known for its success generating customers, sales, and revenue. We will be borrowing their proven methods and applying them to golf teaching and coaching.

This software services company sees the world very simply as shown in **Graphic 1** at the top of this page. This graphic shows the sales model for a company that supplies software services.

The CEO of this company knows there are two things they need to be good at, no matter how good their service is, if they're going to be successful.

The world is full of companies that have a great product but they're unsuccessful, beaten by companies with a lesser product. It's very rarely price that's the issue. It's usually a failure to get enough customers to spend time with them and / or a lack of quality in their sales process, proposition or story.



Graphic 1: Sales model for a company that supplies software services.

The Sales Management Model

The sales group will work backwards in managing this model. To influence their ability to achieve sales goals they know they will need to hit two very important targets:

- The number of sales conversations they convert into closed sales (3 in Graphic 2)
- The number of sales conversations they actually have (2 in Graphic 2)

Again, if they get these numbers right they will make their sales targets. If either of those numbers is too low, they'll fall short of projections.

To help in growing the number of sales conversations they're having, the team is pressing at all times to increase the number of potential customers they get themselves in regular contact with (1 in Graphic 2).

Managing the numbers brings success

Naturally, the software company's sales director will monitor monthly revenue figures, but there are three other numbers (see **Graphic 2** at right) this manager will also watch closely, knowing that to get these numbers right basically guarantees that quotas will be reached.



Graphic 2: Key metrics analyzed by every sales oriented organization.

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Graphic 3 brings that starkly back to golf with a very clear question for you.

Most golf professionals I talk to don't have any plan or quota for the number of engagements they'll create in the month ahead. They see their sales role as responding to people who contact them, whether it be via email, a phone call or when they walk into the golf shop. If I ask what their conversion rate on engagements is, and exactly which products/services they're trying to sell to which market segments, they are very vague in their responses.

This makes obvious sense to you, doesn't it?

But whenever I present the sales model to a golf professional in this format, they find it to be completely logical.

- If you want to sell coaching and / or equipment in the next month, what can you do to create sales engagements?
- How can you design those engagements so that you have the highest rate of conversion?
- How can you grow the number of local golfers who'll join your community, both physical and digital, so that you can increase your total number of sales engagements?

So let's look at three quick ways to influence those numbers.

"People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it." - Simon Sinek

Without doubt you need to continually advertise and promote golf programs to your audience. But let's try and think beyond the most obvious ways to do this. Most emails I receive are asking me to buy *lessons*. That means you're reminding me that you're in the business of *selling golf lessons*.

But that's not the business you're in. You're in the business of *selling improvement and delivering dreams*. Remember that, anytime you're preparing a promotional email. Even if it's a fairly traditional lesson package that you're offering, talk to your audience of golfers about an actual improvement they can make, or a performance goal/dream they can aspire to.



Graphic 3: Key metrics for growing your instruction business.

Your email should include the same simple marketing message, or "strap line," describing *why a golfer should invest in improvement*.

Physical engagement delivers higher conversion rates

Your time is precious. It's what you sell. But if you're attached to a physical golf community, then you have the opportunity to build stronger emotional ties with your prospect database. And people will buy much more quickly from someone they feel more closely connected to.

There's also the "sales math" to consider. When you engage with 16 golfers in a four-hour short-game assessment event, you ought to be able to convert greater than 25 percent of them into a coaching program.

If you have coaches with a couple of blank hours, get them out to play with golfers. They can certainly find a twosome or threesome on the course some weekday afternoon. Joining up with these golfers for just three or four holes will create significant relationships and a higher-quality sales engagement.

These engagements are unusually powerful not just because you or your assistant is there physically, making face-to-face contact. That's significant, but a second major factor is the opportunity to witness—and directly respond to—what you notice in those golfers' games and their skill sets. You are able to provide a solution to a problem or, on the "dream" side, talk about performance possibilities you can identify by watching them.

Let the customer see themselves in your content

The next best option to physical engagement is giving a golfer the chance to recognize themselves—and maybe glimpse their dream—in your promotional content. Obviously, whenever you put together an outbound

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promotion, you have the opportunity to target a specific group. It may be children 12 and under, it may be adult female beginners, it could be senior guys with slowing swing speeds, or even young guns looking to get to scratch. There are many breeds of cat, that's for certain.

Steve Cottingham, a RetailTribe customer in South Africa, recently talked to us about building relationships and generating revenue from a particular population—higher-income adult Indian males in his region. Steve recognized that this demographic group very likely had a golf aspiration but were surely prone to feeling intimidated by the golf environment and doubtful that they could become proficient in such a difficult game.

We had Steve create a simple before-and-after video (see **Graphic 4** at right) to address this market segment, using a strategy that had a lot going for it. His m.o. was to show this exact individual, the up-and-coming Indian executive, engaged in coaching and practice with Steve over a multi-week period. It was a chance for the expert teaching professional to engage the viewer by showing progress and telling good stories. The moral of those stories was that Steve could quickly take a raw beginner from day one to the point where that person would confidently describe himself as a golfer. In each story the feature was a different Indian male, but the viewer heard no particular reference to nationality—it was simply a matter of golfers getting to “see themselves” in the promotional content.



Graphic 4: Use video imagery to better reach specific market segments.

The strategy has succeeded indisputably. Steve has created a strong new-business segment of Indian males who are investing their discretionary money to “look like a golfer in 12 weeks.”

There are so many simple things you can do

We now work with many Proponent Group coaches and many other golf coaches around the world. Our job is to drive their sales numbers using the sales equation I've described in this article. Looking ahead to 2016, you are well advised to add this strategy to your business-development campaigns.



Rick Williams, RetailTribe



It's our passion because we believe that the growth and sustainability of our whole industry depends on creating more engagements with golfers, and there's no more powerful engagement than a golf coach delivering a dream. Contact me at rickenwilliams@retailtribe.com if you'd like to know more.