

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Changing the “Makers” into “Takers”



By Lorin Anderson, President

To paraphrase a recent presidential candidate: “There are two kinds of Americans: Takers and Makers.” The same could be said of American golfers. There are the minority *Takers* of lessons and the majority *Makers* of excuses not to take lessons.

So what are you going to do to grow the number of *takers* at your facility? Yes, you. Nobody else at your facility has the ability to help people play the game better and enjoy the game more than you do.

First, let’s look at the two main impediments to getting more golfers or potential golfers to take formal instruction: Time and money.

My response to lack of time and money is: Divide and Conquer. Successful marketers understand that every market in every industry is more fragmented than ever before. When I was a kid we had six channels to watch on television. Today, I can’t even tell you how many channels are available at my house. I lost track when it got to be more than 300.

Today’s consumer expects to have an almost personalized experience due to the extraordinary number of choices they get to make every day. But, I would say that the golf instruction industry hasn’t segmented instruction offerings to better address these concerns as well as we could and we certainly haven’t done the best job segmenting our marketing efforts. While you don’t have to provide 300+ instruction “channels” to interest everyone, it’s clear that a handful of options won’t cut it any more.

Think about a typical country club’s membership bro-

ken into segments that may have as few as 10 people in them. A few examples might include:

- New member, non-playing spouses
- Juniors six years and under
- Teenagers who have never taken a lesson
- Working women
- Friends of members who want to learn to play
- Father/son or mother/daughter groups

That’s six potentially new market segments just in five minutes of brainstorming. Now to get the makers to become takers, you’ll need to have a marketing message and a specialized program that is priced and scheduled to best fit each group’s needs at your facility.

Think small group programs for the more price sensitive demographics. Think unusual times such as a women’s clinic at the same time as the pee wee’s clinics so that the mom’s who are already there with their kids can “double book” their time. Think tying social time with lesson time such as clinics followed by wine and cheese or a cookout for families. Be as creative as you need to be and talk to the “Makers” at your club and ask them what it might take to get them to become “Takers.” You might be surprised what they tell you. The way we’ve been trying to attract golfers to take instruction hasn’t been very effective, so let’s try some new tricks.

Once you have a program targeted as best you can to that segment’s schedule and financial resources, identify likely candidates and tell them about the new instruction offering just for them. You can’t send emails about 15 different programs to everyone, so to make this work you must segment your mailing lists into the appropriate subgroups and divide and conquer. Follow this plan and you will turn more makers into takers!

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