

WHAT'S YOUR PLAN FOR BEGINNERS?



By Lorin Anderson, Founder

When it comes to beginners who are interested enough to seek out instruction, you must have a plan and you must execute that plan. Too many people have an interest in the game and want to take instruction but never get to the next level of feeling comfortable on the course and feeling that they have become a “golfer.”

Somewhere along this journey, millions of potential participants never quite make it through the gauntlet of learning what's needed in order to not feel embarrassed—how to hit the ball well enough, how to display proper golf etiquette and how to comfortably navigating the game's social conventions.

So what is your game plan for beginners this year? How are you going to make a difference and create more golfers than you did in 2017?

May I Help You?

One easy-to-fix issue in getting more beginners into your instruction program is knowing how to answer the phone. A recent study by Retail Tribe randomly called 50 golf courses to inquire about taking beginner lessons. In the majority of cases the person answering the phone in the golf shop not only didn't sign up the person calling, that didn't even take down a name and number for a return call from the teaching staff. Instead they asked the person to call the teacher back later, or in some cases said they didn't have a lesson program for beginners.

Excuse me? A potential golfer is calling a golf course looking for golf instruction and we don't immediately sign them up for a program? There is no better way to sabotage our own cause,

as an industry. Every golf facility has to have a plan for these calls and the caller should not be let off the line until they are warmly welcomed and signed up for the next beginner class.

Don't Reinvent the Wheel

We often fail to take advantage of what is already available. LPGA Golf 101, Get Golf Ready, Operation 36, Junior.golf and Will Robins Golf Logistix are all very fine programs that you can plug-and-play. Each will give you everything you need to market, manage and execute a high-quality beginner program. These programs get proven results and they create lifelong golf skills. And, most importantly, all can be used to transition the newbie into a confident golfer.

It's All About the Transition

This is most important and for many golf instructors it is often completely and mistakenly left to chance. I'm talking about making the beginner student comfortable on the golf course. Every beginner program *must* have a plan to get the students on the golf course often enough to create an acceptable level of comfort so that this new golfer will continue going on the course after classes end.

So let's set a goal. Every Proponent Group member will make a concerted effort to bring 100 new golfers into the game this year and nurture them until they are comfortable on the golf course. Otherwise, what's the point of a beginner series of lessons if you don't actually create a “golfer” rather than just another “student?” We're only talking about three classes of eight students each per quarter. But if you do this it will have a very positive effect on your bottom line and will fill your pipeline with new students year after year. Now is the time to plant these new golfer “seeds” to grow your business, for when the economy slows—as it inevitably will at some point. **PG**

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