

GOLF DATATECH'S LATEST RESEARCH STUDY:

INDUSTRY STATISTICS: HOW CONSUMERS VIEW GOLF INSTRUCTION TODAY

By *David Gould, Staff Editor*

Scientifically gathered data on consumer attitudes is of great value to any industry. Golf instruction comes by precious little of it, which can make planning and decision-making a unique challenge for academies and coaches. Golf Datatech, LLC is one of the few organizations that reliably and regularly goes into the field and comes back with solid, quantitative information about golfers and what they're spending their money on—or are willing to spend money on. This includes occasional forays by the research group into the golf instruction market.

Golf Datatech's management team is made up of industry veterans with longtime personal and professional connections to Proponent Group staff members, a fortunate circumstance that gives Proponent access to reports Golf Datatech sells for a pretty penny, to its commercial clients. Just recently a study emerged from this valued source titled, "The Business of Game Improvement." It's an ongoing Golf Datatech project, surveying their identified Serious Golfers and studying "how they view the products and services they purchase and use."

It follows up on previous studies completed in 2004, 2007 and 2010 "and attempts to quantify and understand what drives the business of teaching and game improvement tools," in the words of the report's authors.

Given that Golf Datatech is strongly oriented toward product categories and the purchase of goods (less so than services), its studies related to instruction place a heavy focus on information about items golfers can go out and buy. So, of the 12 report segments presented, six focused in this direction, including Online Instruction Videos, Training & Practice Aids, Digital Wireless Swing Analyzers, Portable Launch Monitors, and the like.

Since direct selling of such products is only of slight interest to Proponent Group members, it was important to cull through the material



in search of results that were teaching-related, rather than serving the manufacturers of improvement-related goods.

On that note, the section of the report titled "Practice Patterns" is of natural interest to readers of this newsletter. For the record, **93 percent** of survey-takers at least "agree" they would play better if they practiced more, and of that **93 percent, 48 percent** "totally agree" they would play better if they practiced more. Will they do it? Only **22 percent** indicated they "totally agree" that they "love to practice."

The report's findings, perhaps including the above numbers, include much that would come as little surprise to veteran teachers. In the section on physical wellness and fitness, nearly half of all respondents (**47 percent**) said they "have no physical limitations affecting their ability to play the game, while **32 percent** have lower back issues, **15 percent** have problems with their knees, **12 percent** have arthritis, and **11 percent** have a problem with their shoulder." That's the aches-and-pains truth of student fitness that is quite familiar to full-time teachers.

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Almost all golfers say that they know they will improve with some practice. How do we help them to enjoy working on their games more?

Meanwhile, Proponent members may find this tidbit interesting: **78 percent** of total respondents indicated they are “at least somewhat interested” in having a fitness program designed for them to help improve their golf game, “with **22 percent** of those saying they are very interested,” per the report.

The term “golf school” is somewhat vague, compared to when the concept was first launched, but here’s what Golf Datatech can tell us from its current study: **25 percent** of respondents have attended a golf school at some point in their lives, up from **16 percent** the first time this question was asked in 2004 and up from **20 percent** in 2010. The average 2016 respondent who has been to a golf school has attended **2.0** times, up from **1.8** in 2010. “About **72 percent** of those who have been to a golf school went more than five years ago,” said the study, “while 6 percent went in the past year and **10 percent** have been within the past two years.”

As for dollar amounts spent? “The typical golf school ended up costing an average of **\$793**, which is on par with the 2010 results, but well below 2007 (pre-recession).”

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The topic of Web-Based Instruction threw out data points that seemed to be among the most interesting to any Proponent member. To begin with, some **15 percent** of respondents said they have purchased or participated in online golf instruction. About one-third of that 15 percent said they had “direct communications or interaction with the coaches offering online services.”

Apparently the golfers who did some online learning enjoyed it. The study explains: “No less than **73 percent** of them felt it was at least somewhat helpful, while **12 percent** said it was very helpful.” The report further noted that, “among those who have tried online golf instruction, Revolution Golf (**15 percent**) was used most often, followed by Hank Haney University (**10 percent**). The average spend for online golf instruction was **\$57**.”

There is much more to be found in this exhaustive study. If you would like the full 150 page report, you may purchase it from Golf Datatech for \$595 by contacting the company at **407-944-4116**. Let them know you are a Proponent Group member as they will make a contribution to our education events fund for each copy of the report purchased by our members. **PG**



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