

# WHEN IN DOUBT, TURN TO THE PROPONENT WEBSITE

Take this guided tour of our members-only website, chock full of knowledge that will continue to keep you one step ahead.

by David Gould Staff Editor

**W**hen a teacher's jumbo-sized ball basket emerges from the dispenser you can tell at a glance it's loaded and ready for serious use. That's not the case with a "content" website, which looks the same from the outside whether it's well-stocked or not.

But after nearly a decade of research, reporting, videotaping, photo-gathering, talent-recruiting and archiving, Proponent Group's website is stacked deep and wide with exclusive content on a myriad of topics. The challenge, it seems, is to know what's in there and how best to leverage it, either to hone your craft or build your business.

Last year usage of the site by members hit an all-time high. There were over 19,000 "sessions" of site use, which translates to 50-plus sessions a day, 365 days a year. These visits accounted for 86,965 page views. Some of this activity occurred on the public-facing version of the site, which is relatively minimal and serves the visitor who wants basic information about Proponent.

Still, about three-quarters of all visits were by active members, who are even starting to hop on the site from their handheld devices. Last year, 30 percent of visits were via smartphone or tablet and that number is rising. About 15 percent of visits came from outside the U.S., about what one would expect given the membership's geographical distribution.

Upon entering the site, where did authorized users go? Not surprisingly, the **Job Board** was a clear No. 1, recording 6,711 views. Many of the job postings listed on the Proponent site are either exclusive to our platform or posted to our board before they appear on any other job listings, such as PGA Links or the LPGA website. "Given the quality of our network of instructors," explains Lorin Anderson, Proponent Group president, "employers often try to fill the position first by tapping into our membership—they know they'll get excellent candidates."

In keeping with the bedrock concept that networking and collaboration are top-priority with

<p><b>Videos / Webinars</b></p>  <p>Browse more than 100 hours of business and teaching presentations arranged by category on your desktop, tablet or smartphone.</p> <p><a href="#">Click Here</a></p>	<p><b>Job Board</b></p>  <p>An exclusive, detailed list of teaching and coaching positions for top clubs, resorts and golf academies worldwide.</p> <p><a href="#">Click Here</a></p>	<p><b>Member Mentors</b></p>  <p>A list of experienced members who have offered to assist other members in more than 40 areas of business and teaching expertise.</p> <p><a href="#">Click Here</a></p>				
<p><b>Business Guides</b></p>  <p>Our Business Guides are written specifically for our membership of top tier instructors covering a variety of business issues.</p> <p><a href="#">Click Here</a></p>	<p><b>Member Discounts</b></p>  <p>Proponent Group has arranged for a variety of exclusive member discounts for business services, technology and apparel.</p> <p><a href="#">Click Here</a></p>	<p><b>Business Templates</b></p>  <p>Our templates provide the most instructor-specific information ever created for a wide variety of business situations you face.</p> <p><a href="#">Click Here</a></p>				
 <p><b>Proponent Preferred</b></p>	 <p><b>Surveys</b></p>	 <p><b>The Job Search</b></p>	 <p><b>Certification Guide</b></p>	 <p><b>The Library</b></p>	 <p><b>Member Directory</b></p>	 <p><b>Newsletter Archive</b></p>

After logging on, hundreds of unique business tools are at your fingertips 24/7.

members, analytics shows the **Search Members** button to be second-most clicked: in 2015 there were 1,370 such searches. Next in frequency was the **Newsletter Archive**, where all articles in this very issue will soon be cached—it saw 1,266 visits. **Business Guides** (1,050 opens) and **Business Templates** (1,001 opens) completed the top-five ranking of site pages. In 2015 we took the newsletters apart, so to speak, re-archiving all articles by topic area (rather than requiring members to go issue-by-issue in search of a particular feature or report) to

make it much easier to find a previously published topic.

Rounding out the top 10 most-accessed pages were, in order:

- **Member Discounts** – a group of exclusive savings opportunities just for Proponent members. Using just one or two each year can recoup your entire annual membership fee.
- **The Library** – a place where you can find highly rated books on a variety of teaching and business topics as chosen by our members.
- **Proponent Preferred** – a listing of nearly two dozen highly-qualified and vetted professionals who can provide services to our members in everything from book publishing to insurance issues to app development.
- **Member Mentors** – our list of members who have expertise in a specific subject and are willing to share it with other members covers more than 50 subjects on which you may need assistance.
- **Resume Template** – Our resume template guides you through the process of creating your resume and was created in association with head professionals and academy owners who told us what they wanted to see in applicant resumes. Also in the The Job Search section of the site are guides to writing cover letters and preparing for interviews.

The entire structure of Proponent Group—and the website reflects this—is geared toward providing a multiplicity of tools, tactics and services. Instead of one-offs, there are usually layers of support tools available. In one sense the site's content creates

### My Profile

Member Home

My Profile

Change Password

Payment Update

The My Profile menu on the members' website allows you to update your personal profile information, change your password or update your credit card information at any time.

pathways to go down, so that step by step there's guidance for the myriad challenges.

Consider the member who is looking to make a move from his or her current facility and perhaps find greener pastures. A logical first stop within the website would be Member Mentors, which itself is sub-divided into categories like **Making a Proposal to a Facility, Independent Contractor vs. Employee Issues, Contract Negotiations** and **Growing a Teaching Brand**. For each of these challenges, a group of seasoned and successful members are willing and able to provide information and guidance. Likely any of them would direct this move-ready member right back to the website, to pore over the **2015 Operations and Compensation Survey Results** (located under Member Surveys). That would provide a view-from-30,000-feet of what's possible out there, as a compensation level to aspire to.

## INSTRUCTION GREATNESS, AVAILABLE ON VIDEO FOR MEMBERS

We live in the age of video communications, so it's no surprise how often the **Videos/Webinars** button under Member Benefits gets clicked. In 2015, there 8,798 viewings of video files on the Proponent site. Among the 10 most popular presentations, each was viewed at least 117 times—the top-ranked video, Martin Hall's "How I Teach the Short Game," was watched 647 times. Just below that in frequency was Cameron McCormick's "The Journey to High Performance," with 560 views.

For Trillium Sellers, the great Proponent double-down is to attend a live presentation during PGA Show Week, or at the annual Summit, then watch the tape of it later. "That combination of a face-to-face experience, plus the chance to see and hear it again on screen, has been great for me," she says. For Missie Berteotti, who is still splitting her days between teaching and child-rearing, the time for serious business-building lies in the future. But honing her craft and getting even better results for students has her returning time and again to the likes of Hall, McCormick and the rest. "I'm focused now on continuing to learn from all our great members," Berteotti says enthusiastically. The vault of video content gets new content added constantly, so best not to go too long without dipping into it.

Best of all, Proponent records all presentations at its events throughout the year and posts them for all members to watch at their convenience. And it's all included in the annual membership fee even if you can't attend in person. — **D.G.**

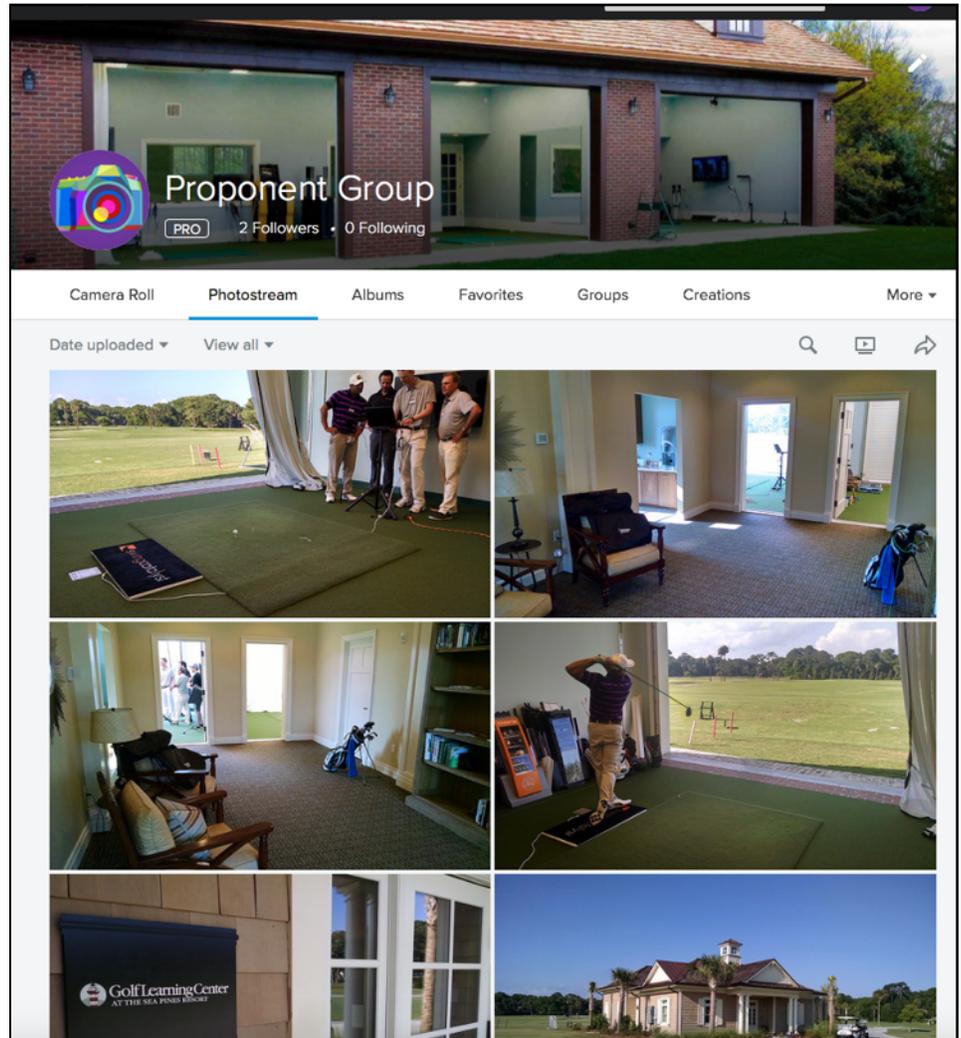


Martin Hall at a Proponent Summit.

All that would lead up to a session with the **Instructor Business Proposal Template**, a blueprint for persuading facilities to set up a mutually profitable partnership between academy and course ownership. Along the way this hypothetical instructor would also do well to review the **Golf Instructor's Guide to Becoming an Independent Contractor**.

When it comes to new construction of learning-center buildings—surely the keystone capital investment in the teaching-coaching field—the Proponent site may be more substantive and comprehensive than all other sources on this subject combined. The **teaching building photo gallery** is enormous, the archived how-to info from expert Tim Cutshall is must-read stuff, the **G2 Case Study** is fascinating and the **Mike Bender New Facility Profile** gets down to the absolute nitty-gritty details of these projects. To further light the way we provide the **Teaching Building Survey and Guide**—which includes costs, specifications and even some what-we'd-do-differently commentary from coaches who already have built their on-range indoor teaching facility.

David LaPour, director of instruction at Colleton River Plantation near Hilton Head, is set for groundbreaking and construction of an academy building in the coming months. In an unusual (but logical) break from standard practice, LaPour initiated the idea, oversaw all planning and even personally spearheaded a funding campaign for it within his prestigious 36-hole golf community. LaPour's reliance on Proponent assets was multi-layered. "During the course of the project," he says, "I made use of the Teaching Building Survey and Guide, the Photo Gallery of existing buildings, plus advice from Kenny Nairn." Indeed, you'll find Orlando-based Nairn on the Member Mentors page under Designing/Constructing a Teaching Building. "I also got support directly from Lorin," adds LaPour. The website's list of Member Benefits doesn't exactly include the one-on-one



Proponent's photo gallery of teaching buildings is one of the largest ever assembled.

consulting availability of Proponent's president—it's just a given.

Some assets on the site are meant for use at certain points on the calendar. That's especially true for the **Annual Report Template**, the **Monthly Golf Chairman Instructor Report** and perhaps **The Business Value of Golf Instruction Report**. The latter can be put to use as one year is ending and the next season is being planned. Trillium Sellers, director of instruction at Woodmont Country Club outside Washington, D.C., has been putting more energy of late into documentation of her contribution to the club's financial health. For that she turns to the **Instructor Economic Impact Calculator** and its companion document, **Economic Impact Study Results**.

**“During the course of the project, I made use of the Teaching Building Survey and Guide, the Photo Gallery of existing buildings, plus advice from Member Mentors.”**

**— DAVID LAPOUR**

“The templates and guides on Proponent’s website have been immensely helpful to me in reflecting the value I create through my teaching and programs,” says Sellers. “Any teaching professional would want to document their value and communicate it, but it’s difficult to know where to start. What we get from Proponent Group is the outline of an objective, professional presentation. It’s a synthesis of what’s out there in the industry, and from that you can pick and choose to customize your own document.”

*(Note: Speaking of content geared toward specific times of year, we suggest you spend a half hour, fairly soon, with the **Golf Instructor’s Tax Return Guide**.)*

Tools like the **Guide to Pricing Services** and the **Guide to Negotiating a Raise** are also uniquely valuable, Sellers feels. “The alternative is calling fellow professionals on the phone more or less randomly,” she says. “This is on a completely different level and it’s enormously useful.”

When Jason Birnbaum spends time on the website, he’ll often start by watching recorded videos from seminars and events he’s missed. “I find it very educational to see presentations by coaches I’m interested in learning from,” says Birnbaum, who is director of instruction at the New Jersey Golf Academy. “Also, I’m always looking to improve my resume, and have used the resume tools on the site, including the samples,” he adds. “The coaching certification opportunities, things like the Henry Brunton/Rick Jenson events, are also very helpful. It’s great to have access to them.”



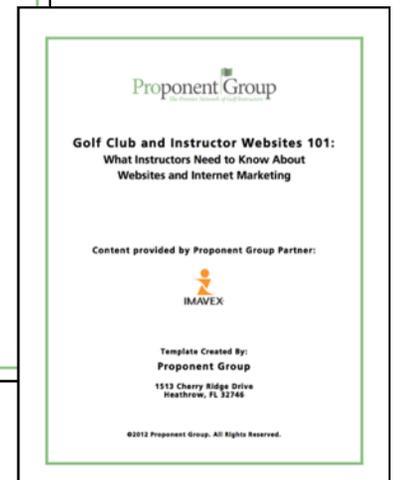
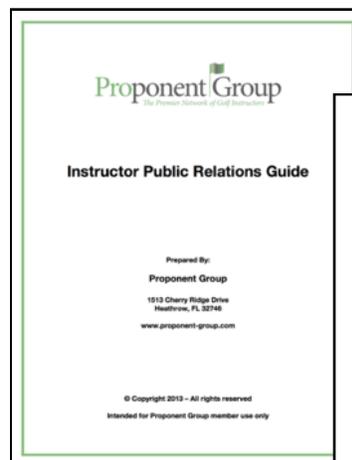
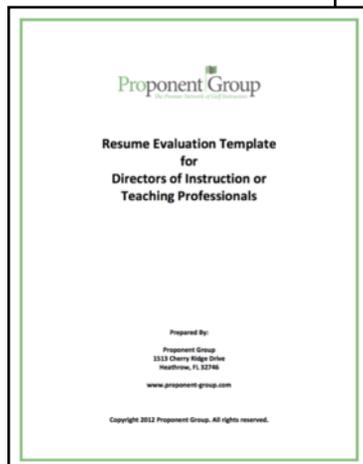
Check the **Exclusive Discounts** menu for a variety of cost saving opportunities from Bobby Jones, Hertz, TrackMan and others.

Every effort has been made to categorize content on the site so that help is easily found. What a member must also find—better to say, make—is time to work with what’s in there. Bill Abrams, a member who teaches seasonally in Chicago and Florida, views the Proponent website as one big message to teaching professionals that says: Step back and re-examine your business frequently, toward the goal, in Abrams’ words, of “working fewer hours but being more

productive.” When he sees a rainy day or some other break coming up, he schedules time to “just sit down and do it,” finding that over time this effort “becomes part of the fabric” of his working life.

Abrams is now at a point where meetings with his business attorney usual involve a Proponent Group form he has filled out or an article he’s read, to guide the discussion along. Perhaps his favorite tools in the toolbox are those Economic Impact documents. “I’ve come back to the Economic Impact Calculator time and again,” says Bill. “It lets a teacher show what he or she brings to the table. At times I’ve submitted those numbers and people have really been blinded by them.” Blinded by the light, in other words. A statement like that one is welcome payoff for every hour and dollar spent researching, writing and reporting to create the website.

Translation: That teaching basket of range balls will keep coming out of the hopper, and members will keep spilling them out each morning, but your exclusive Proponent Group members’ website is also filled to the brim—with what you’ll need to get a far greater return on your daily investment of time and effort. **PG**



More than two dozen Business Guides and Business Templates are available only for Proponent Group members on the website.