

## STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

# Jealousy and Ignorance Limit Teaching Opportunities



By Lorin Anderson, President

My daily conversations with the game's top teachers and businesspeople allow me to see the jigsaw puzzle of issues that make up the golf instruction industry.

A recurring theme that I hear more often is "Why don't golf course/clubs understand the value of high quality instruction?" or

"Why doesn't every club fight for the best teacher it can find?" or "Why is there a Director of Instruction at only 15 percent of all golf facilities in the U.S.?"

There are multiple factors involved and there are two that stand out in my opinion.

First, simmering just below the surface is golf staff jealousy. From the Director of Golf on down to the first year assistant answering the phones in the golf shop, there is a pervasive attitude at many facilities that the golf instructor just shows up, gives his lessons, pockets a big fat paycheck and goes home for an early dinner. And, I can tell you, this attitude permeates all the way to the very best clubs in the game. I saw it over and over when talking to Head Professionals and Directors of Golf who were members of Golf Business Network. Even these top-tier pros often had a problem admitting or understanding the value created by high quality instructors. I believe it was often jealousy that the instructors got to be with the golfers all day and that the students were bonding with the instructor rather than themselves.

The other huge factor is a complete misunderstanding (and general lack of data) of what creates golfer engagement and spending. I'm stunned at how many golf course owners and country club boards of directors have abso-

lutely no idea the critical role high quality golf instruction plays in a facility's financial success.

Hats off to Corey Lundberg and the golf staff at The Club at Carlton Woods near Houston, TX. They recently took the time to isolate the spending of their members who were engaged in season-long instruction programs. Of their 550 golf members, approximately 70 consistently took instruction during the year. The spending for those 70 members (not including their instruction spending) averaged over 80 percent higher than the rest of the membership. Those 70 members as a group spent \$250,000 more than the overall membership averages for food, beverage and golf-related purchases at the club! We will work with our members to gather more of this type of data as the secret to overcoming jealousy and ignorance is education.

There is a big challenge *and* a big opportunity to shift the thinking of course owners and club management. The BIG Goal is simple: Proponent Group wants to provide you the facts to educate your ownership and your fellow golf staffers to the true value of having high quality golf instruction on site. We want the owners, the head professionals and the guy working the bag drop to understand that the entire facility benefits across the board when their golfers are engaged in quality instruction.

We want to show golf facilities that they can enjoy the benefits of having an excellent instructor on property at little to no hard cost to them while enjoying the significant benefits to the club or course's bottom line.

Last year's Instructor Economic Impact Study was a start and it will be updated and improved. This year we will add tools to make it easier to tell this critical story including a redesign of our facility proposal template and more case studies like the one from Carlton Woods. Stay tuned.

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