

A LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Golf Channel Academy Could Be a Game-Changer



This year's Summit is in the books and there is a lot to feel inspired about. I'll begin by saying I couldn't be more excited about Proponent Group's merger with Golf Channel Academy. After seven years of steady membership and benefit growth, the timing is ideal to infuse Proponent with access to the world-class marketing and business resources that Golf Channel delivers. For example, in our panel-led mar-

keting workshops, we tapped the expertise of the network's creative director and its head of digital marketing and social media. Their insights were on a level you probably could not duplicate in this industry.

Proponent Group will have access to Golf Channel experts from a wide array of specialties as we move forward. There is a pivot occurring in our industry. Instruction has been overwhelmed by the vast marketing budgets of equipment manufacturers. In 2013, more than \$600 million was spent to promote sales of golf equipment. Best estimates suggest that national marketing of golf instruction totaled a puny one percent of that \$600 million. This helps explain why so many \$400 dollar drivers were sold over the years. It also points to a reason why—according to the NGF—only 11 percent of golfers took a lesson last year.

When I first heard the Golf Channel Academy concept I was struck by its potential. I could see a lot of water being poured on instruction's bone-dry marketing sponge. For the first time in my career, it seemed possible to move the needle toward a scenario in which more golfers were choosing to spend time with an instructor.

Since I was first approached more than 18 months ago about this project, it has evolved into much more than a

promotional vehicle for boosting interest in golf lessons. For the Proponent member, opportunities will be many. This is a job-creation engine for golf coaching—the first one to come along in many years. If you are a Proponent member seeking to open your own academy, you will have a unique source of assistance and guidance. Whatever the career decisions that face a Proponent Group member, the emergence of GCA means your professional move will be supported by a trove of exclusive data and metrics.

As I have studied this project, I've thought long and hard about what would be best for our members. My purpose all along has been to build an organization that you would be proud of. The mission has been to support the industry in general while always looking for ways to put our members at the cutting edge of the coaching world.

I believe Proponent Group could not have found a better opportunity to continue pursuing those ideals. Golf Channel Academy is an idea whose time has come. Hundreds of other industries have developed marketing platforms to elevate the small businesses that populate their sector of the economy. We fully expect to do just that for high-quality golf coaches who want access to a marketing matrix developed by the largest media brand in the game.

While becoming a Golf Channel Academy location is not going to be for every Proponent member, the level of service we will be able to provide to all members will spike upwards. Given this access to additional resources and manpower we can be sure to continue delivering the benefits you've come to expect and to expand our offerings in the future.

We're just in the first mile of this marathon and it will take time for the pieces to all come together. But be assured this new era for Proponent Group will be highly beneficial to all of our members.

Proponent Group Partners

