

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT & RETENTION RESOURCES

15. Marketing Hints & Tips



Scottish
Golf

1. Website

Your club website remains arguably the most important marketing tool to attract new members and inform potential members about the three key aspects of joining your club: 1. Why they should join; 2. The cost of joining; 3. How they can join. Information on your website should always consider these three vital factors and display them in the most concise and engaging way possible.

Many golf clubs fall into the trap of focusing on the visitor market for website content, but if attracting new members is a key part of your marketing strategy, your website should reflect this and balance visitor-oriented content with new member marketing content.

The following tips should be considered when updating Membership content on your website...

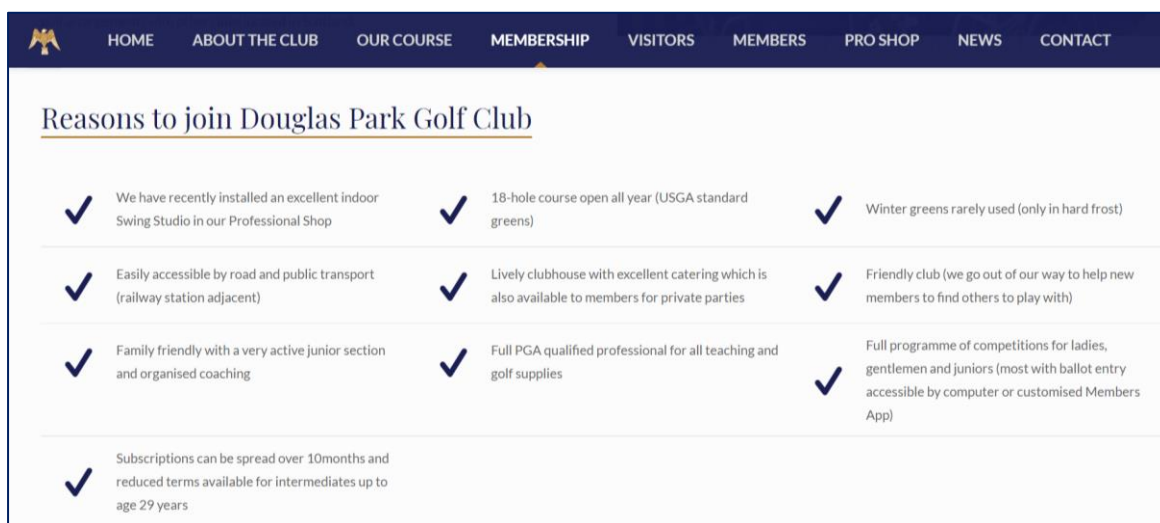
- Ensure your 'Join Us' or 'Membership' section of the website is up-to-date with clear information of your latest prices, categories, joining offers and a downloadable application form or integrated application form. An at-a-glance table of categories and prices is recommended, combined with information on payment options. If you do offer a monthly payment plan for new members, make this clear - £40 per month looks more attractive than £500 a year.

12 MONTH FULL GOLF MEMBERSHIP	£67.83 per month by direct debit or £840 as a one off payment. (Plus a Pro Rata payment and a one off Admin Fee of £46, both payable on first visit). We also offer reduced rates for both older and younger golfers (please see below)		
YOUNG JUNIOR (15 YRS & UNDER) 12 MONTH GOLF MEMBERSHIP	JUNIOR (16-17 YRS) 12 MONTH GOLF MEMBERSHIP	EMERGENCY SERVICES GOLF MEMBERSHIP	
£60 - One off payment.	£120 - One off payment.	£39.42 by direct debit or £499 as a one off payment (Please contact for more details).	
COLT (18-25 YRS) 12 MONTH GOLF MEMBERSHIP	(26 - 34 YEARS) 12 MONTH GOLF MEMBERSHIP	SENIOR (65-79 YRS) 12 MONTH GOLF MEMBERSHIP	SENIOR (80+ YRS) 12 MONTH GOLF MEMBERSHIP
£27.83 per month by direct debit or £360 as a one off payment. (Plus a Pro Rata payment and a one off Admin Fee of £46, both payable on first visit).	£39.08 per month by direct debit or £495 as a one off payment. (Plus a Pro Rata payment and a one off Admin Fee of £46, both payable on first visit).	£52 per month by direct debit or £650 as a one off payment. (Plus a Pro Rata payment and a one off Admin Fee of £46, both payable on first visit).	£37.83 per month by direct debit or £480 as a one off payment. (Plus a Pro Rata payment and a one off Admin Fee of £46, both payable on first visit).

- Make your Membership Application Form as easy as possible to fill in – this could be integrated into your website with electronic fields, or you can use an editable Microsoft Word Document. Remember, this is your number one source of income so make it as easy as possible to fill out!
- Promote Membership Offers or Joining Info prominently on your home page. With more people viewing websites on their smartphones, ensure that this is high on the home page so

a potential member can see it quickly without needing to scroll down. Don't hide it away at the bottom of the page or have it hidden away within another tab.

- Display your prices – don't be afraid to show your prices up front and if you do offer a monthly payment, ensure that this is displayed prominently e.g. Full Membership from £40 per month, or Junior Membership from as little as £5 per month.
- Once you have created your Members Benefits or Reasons to Join list, display these prominently within your 'Join Us' section. Rather than a downloadable PDF, incorporate them into your main text. Or better still, get your members to say them!
- Have a separate tab on your Main Menu navigation bar for Membership, as well as an advert on the home page, to make it easy as possible for potential members to find. If you are running a specific membership campaign, you should consider a homepage 'Takeover' or 'Splash screen' to those arriving at your website for the first time will see the offer immediately.
- Display photos of your members enjoying their membership! They could be out on the course, drinking in the bar or eating in the restaurant. Good imagery of people will bring your membership to life and help potential members identify with the type of club you are.
- **Best practice example - Douglas Park Golf Club:**
<https://www.douglasparkgolfclub.co.uk/membership/>



The screenshot shows a website navigation bar with links: HOME, ABOUT THE CLUB, OUR COURSE, MEMBERSHIP, VISITORS, MEMBERS, PRO SHOP, NEWS, CONTACT. Below the navigation bar is a section titled "Reasons to join Douglas Park Golf Club" with a grid of 10 benefits, each marked with a checkmark:

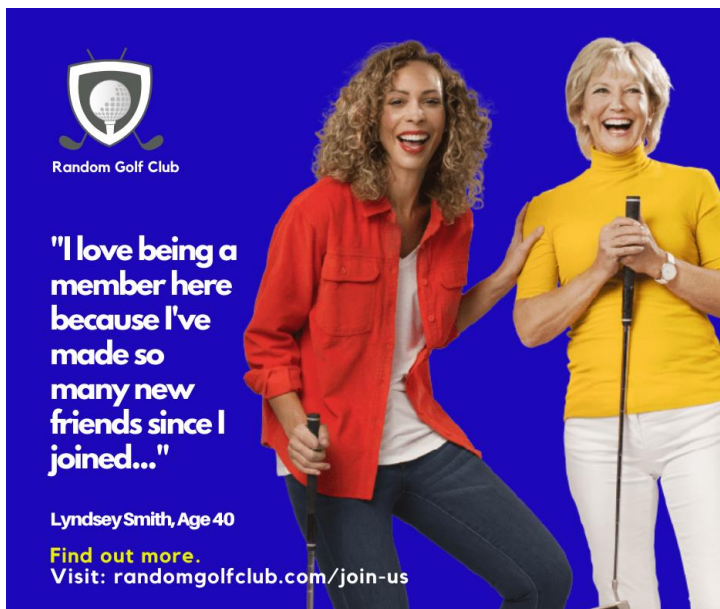
- ✓ We have recently installed an excellent indoor Swing Studio in our Professional Shop
- ✓ 18-hole course open all year (USGA standard greens)
- ✓ Winter greens rarely used (only in hard frost)
- ✓ Easily accessible by road and public transport (railway station adjacent)
- ✓ Lively clubhouse with excellent catering which is also available to members for private parties
- ✓ Friendly club (we go out of our way to help new members to find others to play with)
- ✓ Family friendly with a very active junior section and organised coaching
- ✓ Full PGA qualified professional for all teaching and golf supplies
- ✓ Full programme of competitions for ladies, gentlemen and juniors (most with ballot entry accessible by computer or customised Members App)
- ✓ Subscriptions can be spread over 10 months and reduced terms available for intermediates up to age 29 years

2. Existing Member Testimonials

The best marketeers for your club are your own members, but have you ever considered using them to market your club? There are lots of different options to use your members to help sell your club to potential new members, by inviting them to share their own membership experiences.

- If you are aiming to attract members across a number of different categories, make sure you invite existing members across your different categories, e.g. Juniors, Women, Men, Seniors, so you can communicate their message to potential customers from similar demographics. Don't simply invite your most regular members – encourage input from new members, competitive golfers, social golfers and even parents of junior members.

- Encourage your existing members to write Reviews on your Club, so that they appear on Google searches or your Facebook page. This helps your Search Engine Optimisation and also gives potential members or visitors an excellent first impression if they are searching for your club online. You could offer members a reward for doing this, such as a free drink or a discounted lesson with your PGA pro.
- If you have the resources and capabilities, short video interviews with your members would provide the best media. If your Pro has video editing capabilities, they could produce this for you, or why not ask one of your junior members or local students to assist you with it. These can be used effectively on social media, and if your members know the personalities involved, they are also likely to share the content themselves.
- **Best practice example - Los Naranjos Golf Club:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tq_kaRobksQ
- Another option is a simple quote from a member, which could be used as text within your website, or added to a graphic for social media usage. Simply ask your members why they love being a member of your golf club...



Mr A Member, Aged 55

"I've been a member of Random Golf Club for 25 years and I love playing golf with a group of people who have become good friends. It's great socially, there are lots of competitions to play in but you can also enjoy a quick 9 holes or come and practice your putting. It's great value for money, the food is good without being too expensive and the clubhouse is a very welcoming place that I can bring the rest of my family."

Mrs B Ginner, Aged 40

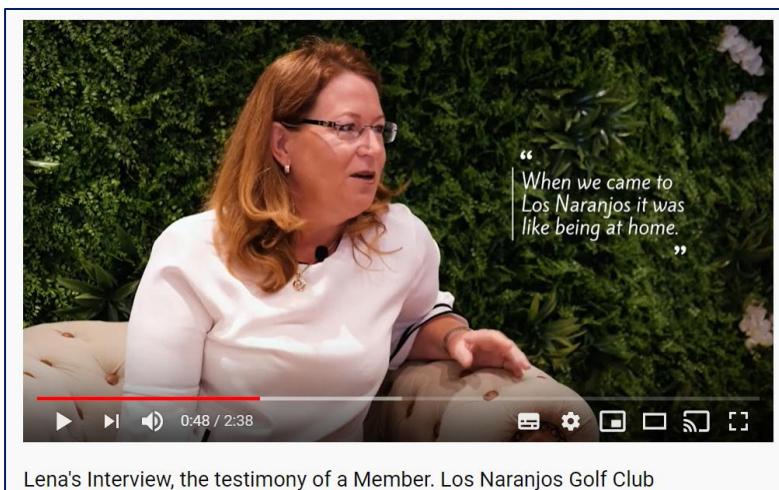
"I joined Random Golf Club last year and I was made to feel very welcome as soon as I walked in the door. I used to think golf clubs were stuffy places, but in reality you couldn't find a more relaxed environment. I've made new friends very quickly, I've been part of the Pro's beginner group lessons which has helped give me the confidence to play and they serve great coffee in the bar. I'd thoroughly recommend my club to anyone in the area who is considering joining or taking up golf for the first time."

Junior Golfer, Aged 10

“My friends started playing golf in Random Golf Club’s junior section a few years ago and they persuaded me to join them. I’ve loved it so far and I’m learning to play very quickly. I’m part of the Junior GolfSixes team which is great fun and my parents have enjoyed using the club too, even though they don’t play. They have a bacon roll on a Sunday morning when I’m out at coaching. It’s actually cheaper than the other sports I play so they like it!”

3. New Member Interview / Q&A

- Particularly for new golfers, joining a golf club can be a daunting experience but hearing about an experience first-hand from someone who has recently been through the journey could prove reassuring and a useful marketing tool.
- For many committee members or a club manager, they may not have been through the experience in recent years, so communicating what its like to join the club in the words of a new member could be powerful.
- This could be done using a video interview – assuming they are comfortable speaking on camera and you have someone within the club who can do the video or conduct the interview.
- If video is not possible, this could be a written account of the new member’s experience, in the style of an FAQ or general interview, inviting that person to talk through their customer journey.
- In producing this, we recommend the following questions:
 - What attracted you to the club? Where did you find the information?
 - What was the joining process like? What were your early impressions?
 - Were you made to feel welcome? Did you get a buddy or paired up with others?
 - Have you made new friends through the golf club? What is the social network like?
 - What type of competitive golf is available for newcomers or beginners?
 - What aspects of being a member do you like most? Would you recommend the club?
- Naturally, you want this interview to be very positive, so make sure your interview candidates are those who are happy with their early experiences of being a new member!



4. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

There are likely to be a lot of clubs and courses are battling for prominence on Google within your own region, so your club faces stiff competition to rank higher on Google searches. The bigger companies such as online tee-time providers are also investing significant budget in this, but there are some easy ways in which your club improve its Google ranking, so potential members - and visitors - can find you directly.

1. Make Sure Your Website is Well-Designed

Google can tell whether your site is designed according to best practices and standards. If your website does not adhere, you're basically saying that your website is inferior to other sites. Use simple web design tools such as WordPress and you'll be able to ensure that the content on your website adheres to current SEO standards. If you are unsure of how to do this, seek advice from members who do have expertise in this area, or speak to a local web design company.

2. Publish Content Regularly

You can improve rankings by publishing news or blog posts regularly – keep your website up to date with the latest information on your club. Blogging tells Google that your website is an important place where golfers can find good information and is a credible source of content. Ask a volunteer to do this, or perhaps your captain, junior captain or greenkeeper can do this on a regular basis. It also helps keep your existing members well-informed and engaged.

3. Have a Good Social Media Presence

Social media channels are a necessity and they also help improve your Google ranking, by being able to register traffic from social media to your website. Sharing content on your social channels is also a great way of driving clicks through to your website, so if you are running a Membership marketing campaign on Facebook, aim to link them through to the relevant page of your website to access more information.

4. Register your Golf Club on Google Maps

Most clubs will have this covered but it's worth checking that your club is listed. All you have to do is prove you are the owner of the business and then provide detailed information about the course, opening hours, and a few photos. To check your current listing, simply type the name of your club into a Google search and see what appears. The more information about your club that you can add into your listing, the better it is for your potential audience and Google ranking.

5. Encourage Online Reviews

We've mentioned this already, but you need to be proactive in encouraging your members and visitors to do this – don't get complacent! Google can tell if your club is receiving favourable reviews and they determine how Google ranks your club in any searches. Favourable reviews will get you visibility and credibility in the eyes of potential customers. You can promote these through member e-newsletters, posters in the clubhouse or a follow-up e-mail to any visitor who has played your course. Once you do get reviews, don't forget to reply and thank people!

6. Ask for Help

If you find digital marketing daunting or don't have the time, ask for help. Hopefully one of your members has some experience through their job or another role, or perhaps one their family members can assist you. Alternatively, you can work with a local marketing agency or look to run an intern programme with your local High School. Digital marketing has become such an important part of a golf club's business, that you can't afford to not to have someone who knows what they are doing taking ownership of it.

5. Advertising

Advertising now comes in many forms and golf clubs have the opportunity to promote their membership offers through an increasingly wide variety of channels, from traditional media such as the local newspaper and roadside banners, through to the more modern approaches of social media. Which channels you use will be dependent on a number of factors, including budget, resource and your target audience, but whichever routes you decide to go for, you need to ensure a clear message, consistency and a call to action.

It would be easy to focus purely on social media, but given golf's typical demographic remains older, we shouldn't forget the more traditional forms of advertising, which can still prove effective. If your club is targeting different markets or age groups, we recommend you consider a mix of the channels available to you. Given your likely budget restrictions, it is vital that you assess your return on investment to establish what works best for your club, while a period of trial and error may be required.

If generating new membership revenue is an important source income for your club, then setting aside the right level budget for your membership advertising campaign. For many clubs, a budget of £1,000 (e.g. the cost of 2 memberships) may feel significant, but if that can generate £5,000 of membership income (e.g. the value of 10 new memberships in year one), then your return on investment will be positive. The average lifetime value of a new member could even be 10 times that, so your ROI will be even greater.

Social Media

Our starting point is Social Media and while it is the newest form of advertising for most golf clubs, it is generally the most cost effective, the most targeted and often the simplest. There are a number of options available to you, but we will focus on Facebook, coupled with its partner, Instagram.

Facebook Advertising

- Facebook ads are generated from your own channel, helping you reach the people you are aiming to target. Facebook allows you to easily create your own adverts through images and text, target a specific audience based on age, geography and interests, with a call to action based on the objectives you set, with a budget that you set yourself.



Once your advert is created, Facebook will distribute your advert to those individuals who match your audience and those people will see your advert appearing on their feed. The more you spend, the more people will see it, and the better your advert, the more people will respond to it – either by clicking through to your website or another call to action you have created, such as liking your page.

- If you are not a regular Facebook user, its likely to sound daunting, however Facebook make it as easy as possible for you to deliver advertising campaigns as it helps them make more money! They offer free advice and guidance on their business pages and provide an easy to follow step-by-step guide to doing it, as well as user tips and videos.
- Creatively, your advert can be in the form of a video, an image, text or a link, and you can also test different formats to see which executions perform better. Whilst its better to employ a professional to do this for you, if you have the budget or a willing volunteer, Facebook’s online guides make it possible for even a novice to do the work themselves.

Instagram Advertising



- Instagram is owned by Facebook and the two advertising platforms are integrated, although you have the choice or doing one or the other, or both. Instagram helps you reach a younger audience and also has a more female bias, if you are looking to target more women as well as potential junior members.
- The advertising platform works in a very similar way to Facebook, in that you are fully in control of choosing your creative, your audience and your budget. Instagram offers two different channels, one being standard posts, and the other being Instagram stories, which are even more targeted to a younger audience.
- Instagram is even more visual than Facebook, so the importance of a good image or video within your creative is even stronger. However, this also makes it easier from a creative perspective, as one good photograph can be enough to attract someone’s attention.

- As per Facebook, we recommend working with someone who is familiar with how Instagram advertising works, but some of your older junior members may be perfectly placed to advise you on how best to use Instagram and get your membership advertising messages across.

Social Media Creative

- Creating adverts using social media is easier than more traditional media, such as newspaper adverts or flyers, as the platforms encourage you to keep the message simple and the word count low. Think about the limited space you have on a smartphone screen to get your message across, while your call to action need only be one click through.
- Content is the king and queen of social media, so the better your content can be, the more engagement you will deliver. Good quality photography or video is powerful, but you don't need a professional agency to do this for you and engaging content can be created without the need to spend much on budget.
- Photography or video can be captured using a Smartphone camera and edited using some of the many free tools at your disposal, such as iMovie, Instagram or other editing apps. A number of clubs now use Canva to create adverts, which costs as little as £100 per year for unlimited advertising templates, fonts and images.
- It is worth exploring Facebook and Instagram to have a sneak peak at how your competitors are advertising, such as other golf clubs, gyms, sports clubs or even some of the bigger brands. Encourage your committee to keep an eye out for examples they like, or ask your members – those in your target audience – to tell you what golf club adverts have caught their eye on social media. If it's worked on them, it's likely to work on your audience.
- Video is an increasingly popular form of social media advertising and while you might not have the budget of a John Lewis Christmas Campaign at your disposal, it is becoming easier to create good quality video content, such as aerial drone footage of your course, testimonial interviews from your members, or a moving montage of photography.
- If you don't have a good bank of images or video from your club, ask your members to help you out. You may unearth a keen amateur photographer or someone with experience in producing videos, or a younger member looking for work experience.

6. E-Newsletters

- Communicating to people directly through e-mail can still prove effective, if you can cut through to the hundreds of promotional e-mails that your target customers might receive in any given week.
- Your starting point should be a database of lapsed members (assuming you are GDPR compliant and you still have their permission). You can market your latest membership special offers to those who have been a member of the club, or a 'Get Back to Golf' type promotion to encourage them to consider re-joining.
- If you have a database or more regular visitors or 'pay as you play' they too could prove a good audience for a membership offer. They already have an affinity with the club and therefore your open rate is likely to be high.

- You could run a data capture competition via your website, Facebook page or local newspaper, offering the prize of a year's free membership of your club. Those who enter and provide permission to be e-mailed can then receive e-communication from you, promoting the latest membership offer and the benefits of joining the club.
- Partner with other sports clubs in your local community and provide an insert to promote golf club membership within their e-newsletter, in return for you promoting something to your membership. For example, you could promote ticket sales for your local rugby club throughout your off-season, in return for the rugby club promoting golf club membership for their 'retired' players. Or a special discount to your local gym members, with a reciprocal offer in return.

7. Local Newspapers

- Contact your local newspaper or community magazine to find out how much it costs to advertise with them. While it may be more expensive than social media, they may have reduced their 'rate card' prices as they need the business! If your own members read these titles, then your potential members are also likely to be readers.
- If your budgets restrict you from taking out a full-page or large advert, you could discuss the option for advertorials, editorials or promotional competitions, and aim to build a longer-term partnership with them. It's also in their interests to form a partnership with you, if you have a good-sized membership that they are interest in reaching.

8. Good Old-Fashioned Flyers!

- Flyers – typically A5 in size – are a traditional form of advertising but remain an effective way of reaching a local audience. The cost of printing flyers is relatively inexpensive, and there's generally good economies of scale on producing large quantities.
- The cost of distribution can often be higher, depending on your audience, but many local community magazine offer good rates if you want them included as an insert. An alternative method is using volunteer members to put them through doors in your target neighbourhoods, such as new housing estates, or partnering with local shops, hotels and other community groups to leave flyers with them, in return for promoting their business to your members.