

# MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT & RETENTION RESOURCES

## 4. MEMBER BENEFITS



### Developing and Promoting your Membership Benefits

If you're buying a new car, you'd expect the brochure or website to tell you the key specifications and various add-ons of that particular model. A golf club should be no different and your potential customers should know exactly what they're buying into and what those add-ons you're selling should be. This is also true for your retaining your existing members, to remind them just why they've chosen to be a member of your club, particularly around renewal time.

We recommend formulate your own Membership Benefits List within your campaign to recruit and retain members. The better you can communicate these benefits and bring them to life, the more effective your sell will be. You may have already done this but is important to refresh your list and keep it up to date.

### Why should clubs need to define their Membership Benefits?

- Acts as a recruitment tool by helping potential buyers see what they can expect from joining that club and highlights the added value that you offer in addition to simply playing golf.
- Supports retention by reminding members what they get for their membership, often telling them things they didn't know!
- Increases member engagement. If members know about services, they are more likely to use them and value their membership more.
- Allows you to identify any gaps or shortcomings in your offering by comparing it to what others are offering. Doing some market research on what other clubs offer can help trigger ideas for your own club to adopt or remind you of what you already offer but don't shout about.
- Allows you to segment your offering. Different categories of membership will have a different set of benefits that meet the needs of different customers. When a potential member is considering joining knowing what each membership offers and at what cost can allow them to choose the one that's right for them.
- It can also allow existing members to upgrade or downgrade membership categories to suit their changing needs, helping them stay in membership in a capacity that suits them.
- You should consider a separate Member Benefits List for juniors. This is because the services and what is important to them will differ significantly from that of adults. It is also best practice to engage your juniors in the creation of this list and how it can be improved. It should be written with readers (juniors and parents) in mind.

## How to Develop a Membership Benefits List

1. The easiest and quickest way is for the Club Manager or experienced Committee Member to produce a list themselves, or with the help of one or two colleagues/members.
2. Pull together a dedicated working group with a mix of people, such as your PGA professional, Committee Member and a selection of members from different sectors of your club – man, woman, senior and junior, competitive golfer, social golfer. Have a brainstorm and develop your list from the consistent themes.
3. Invite your Committee to write a list of their 'Top 10 Member Benefits' to the next committee meeting and dedicate 30 minutes of the meeting to a brainstorm getting everyone's input from their own lists.
4. Delegate this task to your Marketing or Membership Convenor and have this as a priority action. They may brainstorm the list themselves or use their sub-committee to provide input.
5. Once you have your agreed list, you are now ready to communicate it – see below!

## How to Communicate your Membership Benefits List

There's no point in having a membership benefits list lying on a shelf gathering dust. Consider who you want to promote this too and what channels you're going to use. A well presented benefits list can help your club convince potential members to part with their hard-earned cash.

1. Your Membership Benefits List should be presented well and communicated clearly on all materials relating to the recruitment and retention of members.
2. They should be displayed prominently on the relevant section of your website.
3. They should be included within your Membership Renewals communications to existing members.
4. They should be included within your New Member Welcome Pack.
5. They could be featured within your monthly or weekly Members Newsletter e.g. a different one featured each week or month.
6. They could be used as part of a social media campaign, particularly around renewal time, with a different one featured on each post for a week.
7. If you have the resources or people with the relevant expertise, you could capture members on video talking about their favourite benefit – if you have editing skills, they could be developed into a video montage feature, e.g. "The thing I love most about being a member of my golf club is that I can play a competition every Saturday."
8. Select your top 3 key benefits and use them within fliers, posters and digital banners to promote membership, e.g. "Membership Benefits include X, Y and Z."

## Choosing My Club's Membership Benefits

Although each club is different, the key themes of membership benefits will be consistent. The number of benefits you choose is up to you, but you may wish to go with a 'Top 10' or a number commonly associated with golf, such as 9 or 18 for aesthetic reasons. Or you may wish to have a matrix, to show how each category is different, with the higher cost categories delivering the most benefits. The following table gives you an extensive list to select from – to get started, simply cut and past your favoured benefits and tailor the wording according to the type of club you are.

<b>GOLFING BENEFITS</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Unlimited Access to the Course:</b> Being a member of the club gives you the opportunity to play when you like, as often as you like, at the times you like with the people you like. And you can book from your laptop or smartphone through our online tee-time system.
<b>2</b>	<b>Play Competitive Golf:</b> By being a member the club you play regular official club competitions on a weekly basis, with the chance to win some great prizes and money in the twos sweep, and keep those competitive juices flowing.
<b>3</b>	<b>Choose How Much You Play:</b> If time is an issue, we offer the chance to only play 9 holes, or a smaller loop of 6. Or if you're feeling fit, you can 36 holes in a day. As a member, the choice is yours.
<b>4</b>	<b>Match Play Golf:</b> Our club offers a range of match play competitions throughout the season, whether you prefer four-ball better ball with a partner, singles knock-out or mixed foursomes.
<b>5</b>	<b>Have a Handicap:</b> Only by being a member of an affiliated club can you attain an official CONGU handicap, giving you the opportunity to play competitions at your club or take part in Open competitions at other clubs.
<b>6</b>	<b>Get your Handicap Down:</b> There's no better feeling than getting a good score and getting your handicap cut! You can track your handicap on our Club App and share your handicap achievements on social media.
<b>7</b>	<b>Play in Team Matches Against Other Club:</b> We play team matches against other clubs in various leagues across all our membership categories, whether you're in the scratch team, friendly matches, or our junior team. Take pride in pulling on that team jersey!
<b>8</b>	<b>Access to PGA Professional Coaching:</b> Our resident PGA professional will help you improve your game, through 1:1 coaching or value for money group lessons, using the latest technology to help you analyse your performance.
<b>9</b>	<b>Play in National Championship:</b> As a member of a Scottish Golf affiliated club, you can enter one of the many national championships on offer, from the top level of amateur golf through the grass roots tournaments such as the PING Scottish Mixed Championship.
<b>SOCIAL BENEFITS</b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>A Great Clubhouse Environment:</b> Our clubhouse is a great place for eating, drinking and socialising with your golfing colleagues, friends and family, offering fantastic value for money in lovely surroundings.
<b>11</b>	<b>Free Hire of the Clubhouse for Function:</b> Being a member saves you money if you're having an event. Why not celebrate that big birthday, anniversary or other special occasion in the clubhouse, with no cost to hire the venue?
<b>12</b>	<b>A Sense of Belonging:</b> Membership of our golf club is a great way to be part of the local community, the local golfing 'family' and play your part in maintaining golf as a key sport within our local area.
<b>13</b>	<b>The Chance to Meet New People:</b> Being a part of the club offers the chance to meet and network with like-minded people, forming life-long friendships. Our club is renowned for great camaraderie, which is particularly beneficial if you are new to the area.
<b>14</b>	<b>A Fantastic Social Calendar:</b> Our club offers a wide range of social events with something for everyone, whether you like live music, a family Sunday Roast, Italian Theme Night or our Christmas Parties.
<b>15</b>	<b>Invite Your Friends:</b> We offer a preferential 'Member Guest Rate' green fees giving you the chance to invite your friends to play your course. By making this reciprocal among your golfing friends, you can play many courses at a fraction of the normal price.
<b>16</b>	<b>Bar Discount Card:</b> As part of your membership fee, we include £XX on your bar card which you can spend throughout the year. Each member also receives a 10% discount on all bar purchases.

<b>17</b>	<b>Become a Volunteer:</b> Giving something back to the club can be a hugely rewarding experience and you don't have sit at every committee meeting to help out! We have a number of sub-committees where you can lend your expertise in a relevant area.
<b>18</b>	<b>Watch Live Sport in the Clubhouse:</b> We show all the major sporting events live in the clubhouse on our screens, from the Masters and Open Championship to Premiership and Champions League Football and 6 Nations Rugby – all with a great atmosphere.

## The Matrix Format

An effective way to give a snapshot of what benefits align to what categories of membership is by creating a matrix of Member Benefits. This highlights the extra value a member gets from paying more and encourages potential members to choose a category which best suits them.

The positives of this format are it allows members to see what they're missing out on and upgrade, and for potential ones to pick a category that suits them. The downside is it doesn't allow for much expansion on each benefit. The table below shows an example of how this might be presented:

<i>Your Golf Club</i> Member Benefits	Membership Category & Price			
	Full	Flexible	Junior	Get into Golf
	<b>£450</b>	<b>£250</b>	<b>£80</b>	<b>£100</b>
10 hrs group coaching from PGA Pro				
Saturday AM tee times		<b>£25</b>		
Saturday PM tee times				
Sunday AM tee times		<b>£20</b>		
Sunday PM tee times				
Monday to Friday AM tee times		<b>£15</b>		
Monday to Friday PM tee times				
Play in club competitions				
Get an official CONGU golf handicap				
Play in Club Championship				
Guest green fee rates	<b>£15</b>	<b>£30</b>		
Play in club competitions				
Book the clubhouse for events				
Access to reciprocal golf				
Bar Discount	<b>15%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Volunteer for the Committee				
Watch Sky Sports in clubhouse				
Get your own locker				
Keep healthy in the fresh air				
Friendships and club camaraderie				
Use of practice facilities				
Vote at General Meetings				
Family Friendly Environment				
Services of a PGA Professional				
Free social membership				
Convenient online tee time booking				
Easy monthly payment option				

## Best Practice Club Examples

Before embarking on your Membership Benefits List, we recommend you do some research on what other clubs have done, looking at what benefits they have included and how they are communicated.

We have selected the following clubs – some of which we have worked with to develop this – as your starting point:

[> Cruden Bay](#)

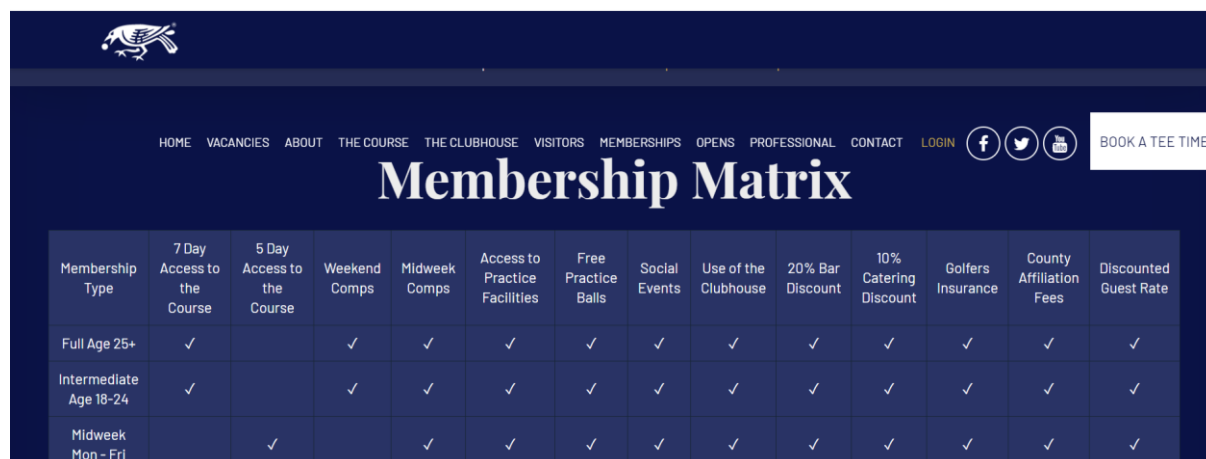
[> Peebles Golf Club](#)

[> Cardiff Golf Club](#)

[> Trump International Links](#)

[> King's Acre Golf Club](#)

[> Wilmslow Golf Club](#)



Membership Type	7 Day Access to the Course	5 Day Access to the Course	Weekend Comps	Midweek Comps	Access to Practice Facilities	Free Practice Balls	Social Events	Use of the Clubhouse	20% Bar Discount	10% Catering Discount	Golfers Insurance	County Affiliation Fees	Discounted Guest Rate
Full Age 25+	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Intermediate Age 18-24	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Midweek Mon - Fri		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Summary

Creating your club's own bespoke Membership Benefits List is a very useful exercise that can be used to support both membership recruitment and retention. It should form a key part of your communication plan within any membership recruitment campaign, together with ongoing promotion of it to your existing members.

Once you've created it, keep it up to date on annual basis and focus on any key points of difference to give you the edge of your competitors. Try and bring to life through the words of your members as they are the ones living and breathing the benefits on a daily basis.

Finally, take pride what benefits make your club great and don't be afraid to shout about them.