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MARCH 2020



Beware of Barter

The NGCOA has released a new research report that shines the spotlight on the negative fallout from bartered tee times.

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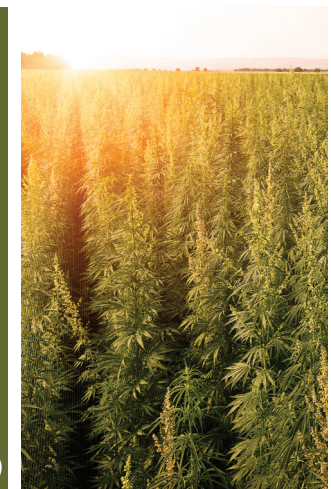


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This special report takes a look at the myths, hype and potential of the products.

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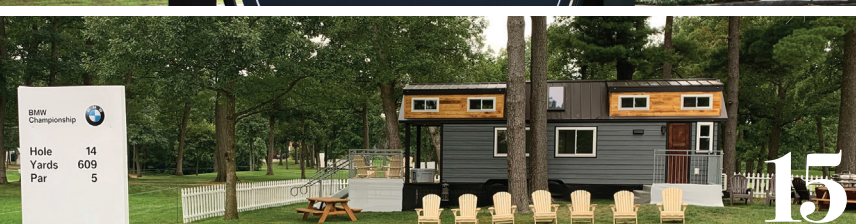
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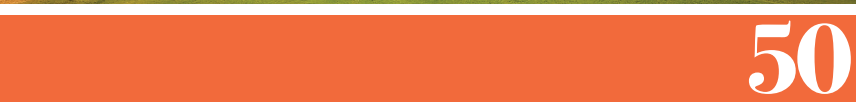
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From the CEO Vantage Point

By Jay Karen
CEO
NGCOA
jay@ngcoa.org

Getting Right (Size) with It

It's no surprise the recent report by the USGA and R&A on distance is getting a lot of attention. Golf has never been short on passion or opinion. Most are focusing on the question of ball flight distance by the most elite players, and how it may (or may not) be changing the pro game in a negative way. Also addressed are questions about the distance recreational players hit the ball, and excessive golf course length across the globe.

I'll let others discuss the question of bombs off the tee on the tour. It's interesting that we have converse dilemmas here: tour pros hitting far off the tee, and recreational golfers not hitting it far enough. Without changing equipment standards (I, for one, value standardized rules in the golf universe), the most obvious answer is staring us in the face. And there are some pretty smart people in this industry doubling down on it. We're talking about getting more recreational golfers to play the most appropriate tees for enjoyment, recognizing that sufficient challenge is inside the enjoyment algorithm. If challenge overshadows enjoyment, which it does for many new golfers and those on the brink of quitting, then we have a big problem, Houston.

The American Society of Golf Course Architects, USGA, Longleaf Golf and Family Club, architect Jan Bel Jan, and Arthur and Jann Little are among a few crying from the rooftops how important it is to get golfers playing the right set of tees. It's time NGCOA gets involved as well. We need to break down the rigid cultural barriers keeping people at the wrong tees

for too long. Change at the course level will require pro-to-golfer engagement, changing scorecards and pre-game routines, new ways to figure out stroke allocation for friendly competition, etc. It won't be easy, but I am a first-hand witness of how moving up a set of tees can inspire a person to go from playing two rounds a year to 20 (I'm speaking of my dad). Let's dispense with the archaic concept of gender or age assignment to tee boxes and focus solely on driving distance.

I've heard Mike Davis preach about excessive course length for four years now. Over 95 percent of golf courses in the U.S. will never host tour events, but many are maintained at 7,000 yards or greater. At many of those, resources are too often wasted maintaining elements used by 1 percent of players. We need to give ourselves permission to downsize. Better yet, right size. One of my favorite management philosophies is that we should manage for the typical and deal with exceptions, rather than manage for those exceptions. We've allowed ourselves to build and maintain too many courses for the exceptions. Where there are courses and clubs catering to an inordinate number of single-digit handicappers who love the 7,000-yard experience: you be you! Don't change (except, of course, to be sure you also have multiple sets of tees for the rest of the crowd).

I can't imagine it's easy being the USGA and R&A on this question, when you have arm-chair quarterbacks eagerly shouting into their megaphones. I will not fault them for taking a holistic, long-term perspective with the sustainability of the game and industry as context. Rigidity is not always a bad thing. Yet, we can also display flexibility by allowing and promoting forms of play that have nothing to do with the rules and standards. As someone said to me recently, let's not be the fun police.

Let's keep the conversations going, and take some action. **7B**

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VIEWPOINT

Addressing The Issues

By **Ronnie Miles**
Director of Advocacy
NGCOA
rmiles@ngcoa.org

When Are Service Charges Tips?

Those of us in the service industry have always assumed there was a clear delineation between service charges and tips. These assumptions are being tested not only by the federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations but also within state legislatures and numerous state and federal courts.

In 2012, the IRS issued a ruling clarifying the difference between a tip and service charge for tax purposes. They determined that automatic gratuities (a percentage automatically added to a restaurant bill) are service charges, rather than tips for tax purposes and that any portion distributed to employees must be treated as wages for FICA purposes. In January 2014, employers were required to treat mandatory gratuities as service charge wages instead of tips.

The IRS has stated in order to determine the difference between a tip and wages, certain facts must be determined. They will generally categorize a payment as a tip when the following factors are present:

1. The payment is made free of compulsion.
2. The customer retains the right to determine the amount.
3. Payment is not subject to negotiation or employer policy.
4. The customer determines who gets payment.

But what about large parties or catered events? The same factors must be examined with respect to automatic gratuities.

While the IRS does not define how the service charges are to be distributed, employers must ensure minimum wage and overtime laws are met. Unlike tips, service charges

belong to the employer and, generally, the employer can keep the income from the service charges or distribute it to employees. It is generally the employer's decision as to how to allocate the money.

This definition regarding allocation of service charges is being challenged in the California court system. In a recent court case, O'Grady v. Merchant Exchange Productions Inc., the California Court of Appeals held that a mandatory service charge could potentially be found to be a gratuity that must be distributed to service employees. The complaint alleged that the way the service charge was presented to customers led them to believe they were gratuities to be paid to service staff. The court held that the

“NGCOA encourages members to review their mandatory service charge policies” - RONNIE MILES

term “service charge” can have many different meanings, and “simply calling them a service charge hardly ever explains what it is or why it is being imposed”

It is expected that it will be the California Supreme Court that decides whether, and under what circumstances, a mandatory service charge can or will be considered a gratuity, and thus be treated as a tip.

So what should California golf clubs do to protect themselves? NGCOA encourages members to review their mandatory service charge policies and consider taking steps to clarify to your customers if the mandatory service charges will or will not be paid to the employees providing the service. Further, if the intentions are to not share service charges with employees, consider providing customers a clear method of providing gratuities or tips to the employees.

NGCOA will continue to follow this case and update members on any guidance issued by the California Labor and Workforce Agency. **RM**



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VIEWPOINT

Coalition Concerns

By **Jared Williams**
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Be Ready When You're Called

As an athlete and avid sports fan, I've heard coaches, commentators, teammates and fans use all sorts of idioms that speak to being prepared. Answering the bell. Staying ready so you don't have to get ready. Being ready when your number is called.

There's something about that last one – being ready when your number is called – and the concept of preparation that has always resonated with me.

As I write this, we are fresh off the heels of an eventful week, which saw the entire golf industry make the trek to Orlando for the Golf Business Conference and the PGA Merchandise Show. To say it was a whirlwind seven days would be quite the understatement.

I arrived at the conference Sunday evening ahead of Monday morning's golf outing.

Monday afternoon, during NGCOA CEO Jay Karen's opening statement, he made it publicly known that we had been invited to Washington, D.C., for a meeting with the Department of Justice. They wanted to discuss the merger between GolfNow and EZLinks.

This news sent a palpable energy throughout the room, and a sense of both excitement and bewilderment continued to resonate throughout the industry the entire week.

What is the NGCOA doing? What is their goal? How did we even get to this point? Simple – preparation and anticipation.

When I joined the NGCOA back in 2016, one of the first things I did was reach out to a number of different antitrust counsel and go through a fairly thorough vetting process. I was looking for someone with previous work experience at the DOJ. We anticipated that much of the discussion around tee time distribution, market share and pricing might

require us to consult with legal counsel in a number of areas. We wanted to be prepared and know the best way to handle any potential communications with the DOJ.

Fortunately, over the last four years, our antitrust counsel has gained a keen understanding of the relevant market, the major vendors and the practices unique to the golf industry (barter).

In late November, when news broke of the merger between GolfNow and EZLinks, I immediately sent our counsel a link to the press release. Having a full understanding of the relevant players in the market, our counsel expressed some concern and sought to gain clarity by asking Jay and me a number of industry specific questions. After some dialogue, I drafted a report, and we then had the initial phone call with the DOJ in late December.

Following that phone call, the DOJ requested we come to their Antitrust Division Offices for a formal discussion on the matter. The meeting took place on Jan. 24, the last day of the PGA Show. We spent 2½ hours meeting with six lawyers, an economist and a paralegal.

We now wait to hear back from the DOJ as they engage in internal discussions on the matter.

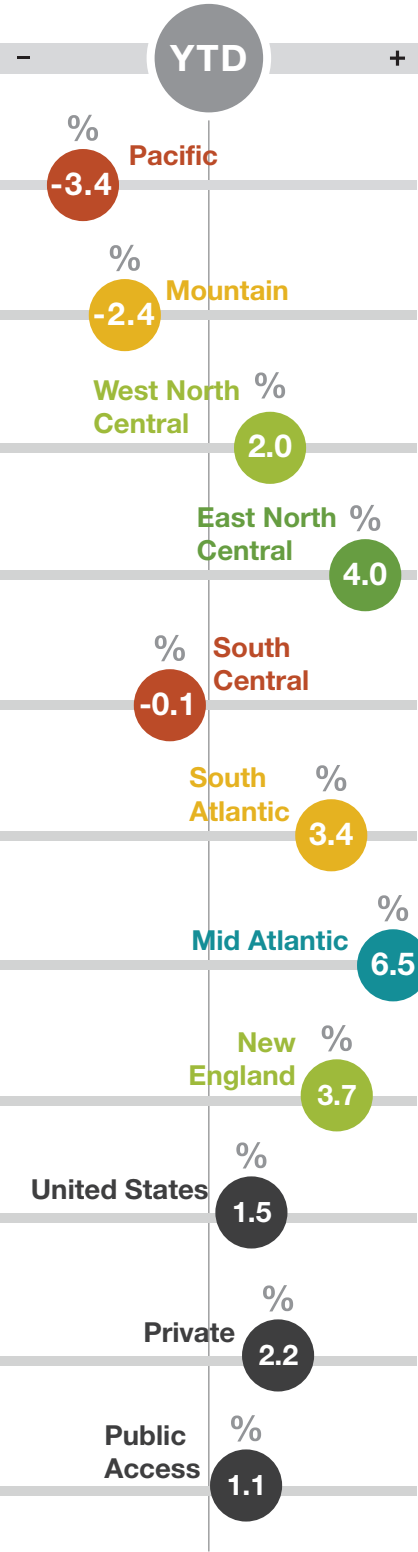
This is how the NGCOA advocates on behalf of its members. Our antitrust counsel was ready when his number was called. We now ask that NGCOA members also be prepared in the event that you are contacted by a member of the DOJ regarding this merger. In these cases, the harm to the customer (golfer/golf course) is a critical component in determining whether or not to challenge a horizontal merger.

Honest and truthful responses about your experiences with the companies and any concerns you may have as a result of the merger are welcomed. Your candor and time are appreciated. **JW**

Rounds Played

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Data percentage compared to same period last year.



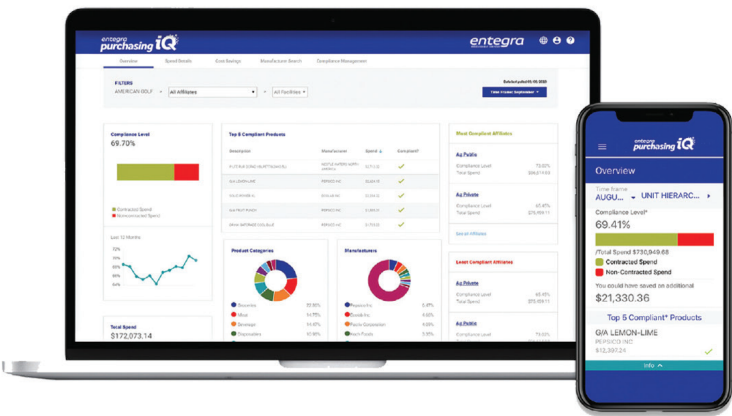
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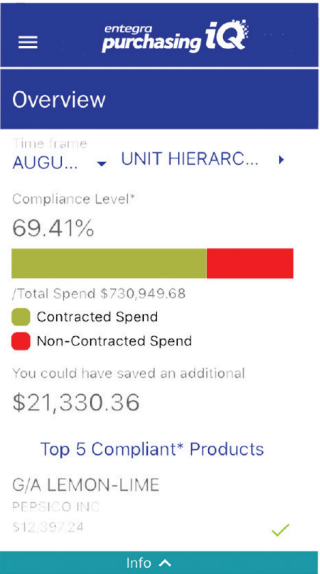
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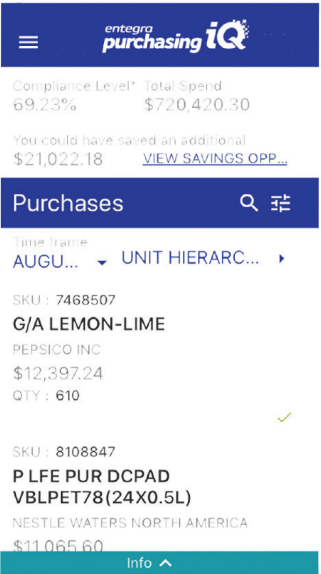
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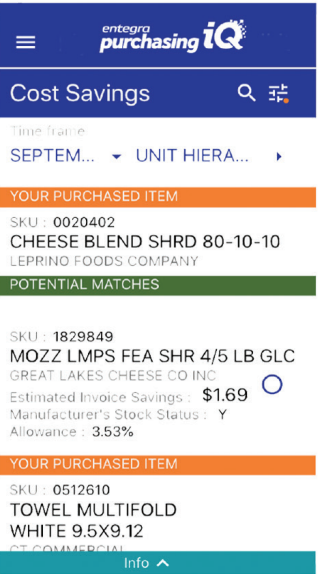
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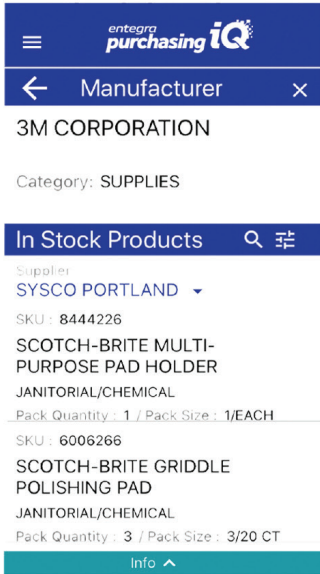
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Innovation Insights

BY SCOTT KAUFFMAN

Robo picker automates practice ranges

Autonomous mowers and self-operating caddy machines are already found on golf fairways and greens. Now, the golf robots are coming to a range near you. At least that's the golf goals of Echo Robotics.

Echo Robotics is part of Echo Inc., a Northbrook, Illinois-based company specializing in professional grade outdoor power equipment for more than 40 years. The company got in the business when it started importing high-performance 2-cycle engines and hand-held products manufactured by Kioritz Corp. of Japan in the early 1970s.

Eventually, Echo Inc. developed its own line of lawn-care products and now the firm is focused on growing its landscape and sports turf footprint after introducing the TM-2000 robotic mower a year ago. Last October, the company added to its autonomous arsenal with the RP-1200 robotic range picker.

Two of the biggest benefits to fully automating the practice range with Echo's emissions-free machines: "consistent cut-quality for healthier turf" and the ability to pick the range in any weather while freeing up time for the maintenance staff to "focus on bigger-picture items."

The new RP-1200 will work in tandem with the TM-2000 mower, unveiled at last year's Sports Turf Management Association (STMA) conference. Or, the TM-2000 can be purchased separately and with special protective discs that allow the machine to continuously mow without damaging balls on the range.

According to Echo Robotics Vice Presi-

dent Joe Fahey, prices for the lightweight mower designs that can be controlled from a desk or smartphone are \$9,900 for the smaller TM-1000 and \$15,500 for the TM-2000 that can maintain up to 3 and 6 acres, respectively. The basic cost for a mower and picker package is about \$40,000.

"Our new autonomous range picker is really going to be a game-changer for golf courses all over the U.S.," Fahey said during a break at this year's STMA national conference and exhibition in Florida. "We're ready to get them out onto the courses and show superintendents how much easier this can make the management of their ranges."

"The overall aesthetics and benefits to the turf of frequent mowing are very clear to them. Some organizations are motivated by the ecological and low noise benefits. We have placed (mower) units around the country and the positive responses are spreading."

Fahey, who oversees product services and robotics, said reaction to the RP-1200 has been slower in coming due to its late season release October 2019. Nonetheless, during a break at this year's STMA, Fahey was optimistic about its prospects and representing Echo Robotics for the first time at the PGA and Golf Industry shows.

"Reaction to our announcement has been overwhelming," Fahey said. "The thought of automating the driving range

"We're ready to get them out onto the courses and show superintendents how much easier this can make the management of their ranges."

- JOE FAHEY

is very appealing to most golf pros and superintendents. They are very curious about this disruptive technology and how it can help them manage the range better.

"There are a number of considerations regarding the use of autonomous pickers and mowers. First, there has to be an understanding of how this works and the new paradigm of going autonomous. It's not the 'way we've always done it' and that's hard for some to accept at this point. However, the early adopters are very open and anxious for this new technology.

"Also, there is the issue of ball management. Once the balls are picked, how the balls are managed from there may be different than what they are doing now."

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of Aloha Media Group, and is regular technology columnist for Golf Business. You can contact him with tech news at iwritegolf@gmail.com.





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THE START

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Bantam Built reports the company built its first tiny house on wheels in 2015 after entering into a television contract with ITV Creative, formerly Loud Television, to aid in the development and production of tiny houses on wheels for their show, "Tiny House Nation."

Room with a View

Going Tiny Makes Big Impact at Medinah

By Scott Kauffman

When top private golf and country clubs add new amenities for members these days, the scale and cost of these projects are usually large in size and luxurious and pricey by nature.

At Medinah Country Club near Chicago, the historic club with three courses and Ryder Cup/championship golf tournament lineage, it was recently proven size doesn't always matter when it comes to creative new modern-day amenities. At least that was the case during the PGA Tour's 2019 BMW Championship, when the club debuted the unofficially dubbed, Tiny House.

Positioned just off the 14th tee, the 350-square-foot abode on wheels got just as much attention as eventual winner Justin Thomas and Tiger Woods every time they stepped up on the tee box. And rightfully so. In PGA Tour history, it was quite possibly the closest anyone has ever been to watching a professional golf event from the comforts of their "home."

In this case, it was Medinah member Vaughn Moore who had the pleasure of renting the home for an undisclosed five-figure amount and watching the tournament action with 17 of his closest friends from

the 37-foot by 8-foot wide hospitality amenity.

“It’s amazing the attention it has drawn,” Moore was quoted as saying at the time in a local Chicago Tribune news report. Moore went on to say, “It’s hilarious and by far the best deal in hospitality.”

The company behind the unique home is builder Robert “Bob” Clarizio of Bantam Built Homes in South Elgin, Illinois. As Clarizio describes it, his “tiny houses are built with the integrity of a custom house... while incorporating the function of a RV travel trailer.”

According to Bantam Built, the company built its first tiny house on wheels in 2015 after entering into a television contract with ITV Creative, formerly Loud Television, to aid in the development and production of tiny houses on wheels for their show, “Tiny House Nation.”

Since the last episode wrapped up in November 2016, Bantam Built has built and sold dozens of its homes throughout the country. The Medinah model featured a full bathroom, high-end galley kitchen with a four-burner stove and microwave plus two lofts with queen-sized beds.

Innovative Medinah Country Club

General Manager/COO Robert Sereci, who already has an on-site chicken coop with 40 hens producing U.S.D.A.-certified eggs, was the brainchild behind Medinah’s latest marketing twist. Sereci hoped to have permanent tiny homes staged on property for summer interns to use and future marketing events but he couldn’t convince his membership to buy into the homes that run an estimated \$50,000-\$100,000 per home.

Nonetheless, Sereci said the 2019 tournament was such a success, the club would certainly bring the tiny homes back into play for future professional events.

“It’s a no-brainer,” Sereci said. “This is something clubs can certainly incorporate into their own operations, especially daily-fee courses. For club owners, it’s an easy win for them.”

Olympia Fields Country Club seems to agree. When the private club plays host to this year’s BMW Championship south of Chicago, the elite venue will introduce several of the tiny house hospitality packages as part of the tournament festivities organized by the Western Golf Association. **WB**

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of Aloha Media Group.



“It’s a no-brainer. This is something clubs can certainly incorporate into their own operations, especially daily-fee courses. For club owners, it’s an easy win for them.”

-ROBERT SERECI



Bantam Built tiny homes run an estimated \$50,000-\$100,000 per home. They were a temporary installment for the 2019 tournament.

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Dormie Network Offers Low-Carb Option On All Its Courses

BY STEVE EUBANKS

Keto, the low-carb, high-protein, high-fat diet that has made the rounds several times in the last couple of decades, is on the rise again, especially among men.

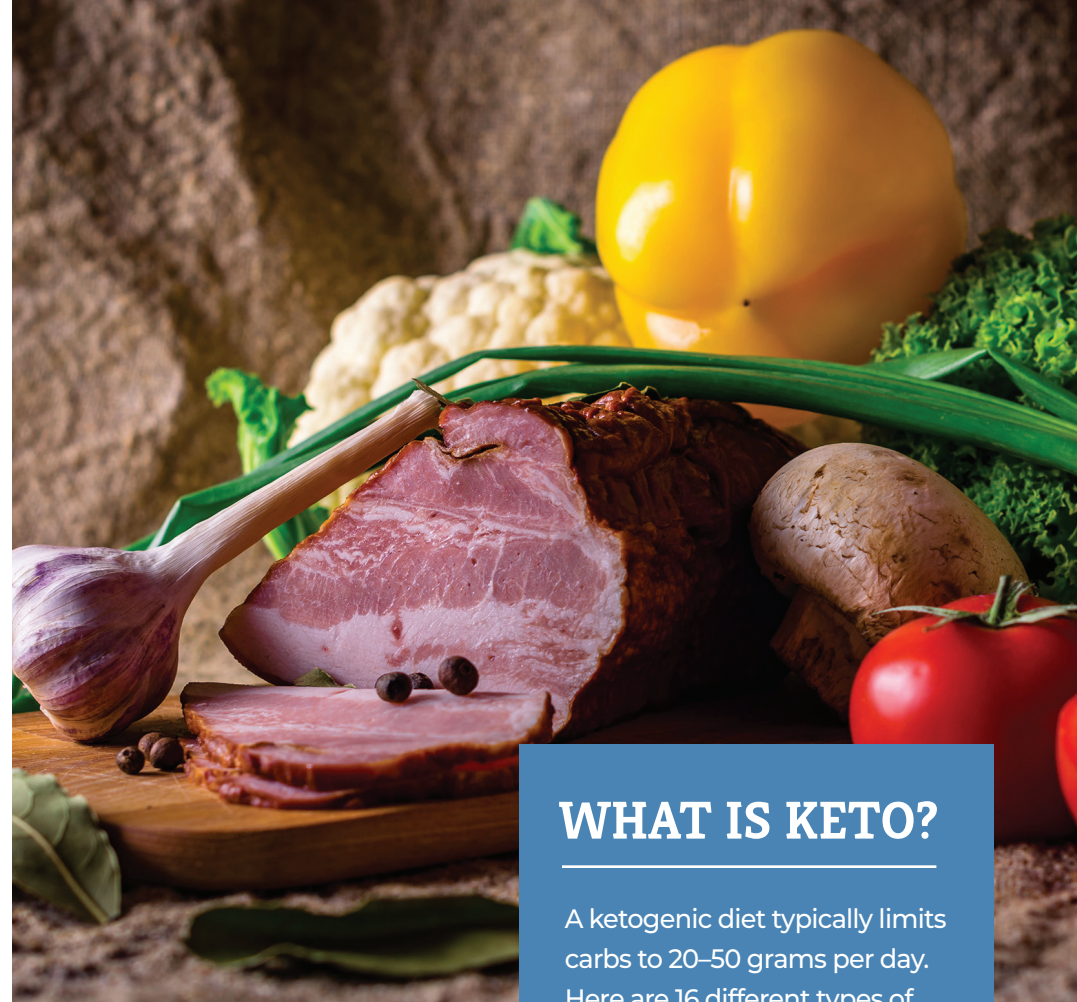
Bolstered by new medical research that shows the old food pyramid was wrong, and in many ways contributed to obesity, more people than ever are discovering that cutting out bread and sugar while replacing potatoes with a slice of avocado leads to lower weight, better health and more energy.

But what if you're on the golf course where a hotdog comes in a bun the size of a sewer pipe and club sandwiches have at least three layers of bread and a side of fries?

The Dormie Network, the Nebraska-based golf company that owns high-end private clubs throughout the continental U.S., has the solution.

"We don't have beverage carts but at all our comfort stations and in all our halfway houses we offer Certified Piedmontese beef jerky," said Mark Ruhga, a PGA of America professional who is the chief operating officer of Dormie Network. "We offer it, first, because it tends to match up with some current diets – more protein and fewer carbs, which is trending with our largely male customer base."

"But it also fits in with our business, because our owner's family also owns



WHAT IS KETO?

A ketogenic diet typically limits carbs to 20–50 grams per day. Here are 16 different types of Ketogenic foods.

- Seafood
- Low-carb vegetables
- Cheese
- Avocados
- Meat and poultry
- Eggs
- Coconut oil
- Plain greek yogurt
- Olive oil
- Nuts and seeds
- Berries
- Butter and cream
- Shirataki noodles
- Olives
- Unsweetened coffee and tea
- Dark chocolate and cocoa powder

"We offer it, first, because it tends to match up with some current diets – more protein and fewer carbs, which is trending with our largely male customer base."

– MARK RUHGA

Certified Piedmontese Beef. As a result, we get a lot of our proteins from them. It's a high-end, lean beef and they offer a lot of really nice cuts."

Jerky isn't the only carb-free option Dormie offers. "We're starting to roll in some snack sticks that are one-ounce cubed beef sticks," Ruhga said. "Those are great. Players love them."

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.



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ONLINE More golf industry news from the web



National Golf Day 2020

Industry leaders will gather in Washington, D.C., May 5-6 to meet with members of Congress, the executive branch and federal agencies to discuss golf's 15,000 diverse businesses, 2 million jobs impacted, tax revenue and tourism value. For a schedule of the events, go online to wearegolf.org/national-golf-day



On the Air

Catch up with the Golf Business podcasts on your own schedule. The complete library is on iTunes, SoundCloud and at accelerate.ngcoa.org/education/podcasts.



Leading with Values

If you missed this feature from the February 2020 issue of Golf Business magazine, check online at golfbusiness.com to learn more about the NGCOA's new board president – Steve Graybill.



New Logo Infuses Cool Into 100-Year-Old Muni

BY STEVE EUBANKS

Understatement goes a long way, especially in a traditional game like golf where taste is often measured in degrees of restraint. Steve Leary, the mayor of Winter Park, Florida, a beautiful hamlet that is a healthy jog northeast of downtown Orlando, understood that better than most. A former marketing executive and commercial real estate entrepreneur, Leary had long appreciated high-end understatement.

So, as the town redeveloped its 100-year-old, 9-hole golf course in 2014, Leary knew it was time for a rebranding. "When we renovated the course, the designers, Riley Johns and Keith Rhebb, said, 'Look, if you're going to redesign this course and it's not going to be traditional, you might want to go with a different kind of logo.' So, I reached out to a friend of mine named Mark Calvert with Evolve Design. Mark said, 'You have a more traditional audience, but you also have a younger, cooler crowd that's coming out.'"

Throw in some ideas from guys like Matt Ginella (formerly of Golf Channel) and others in the golf industry and the city landed on a simple WP9 logo.

"We wanted to go with a simple pen design that you could stamp on anything," Leary said.

Not only has the logo taken off, it's become a status symbol. If you know the WP9 logo, you know about the hidden 40-acre gem in Winter Park.



Reflecting on its heritage, the new Winter Park logo maintains itself as a status symbol. The clean lines and logo variations bring it up-to-date inviting a new generation to the game of golf.

"We wanted to go with a simple pen design that you could stamp on anything."

- STEVE LEARY

"I know that a camel is a horse designed by committee but in this instance, it worked," Leary said. "From the designers to the golf industry pros, to me who was driving this on the city side, we ended up with something pretty special. It's the simplicity

that makes it. Even if you don't know what it is, it's still a cool logo and the name of the course hits you right there. It's WP9."

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.



Tim Cooke, PGA master professional oversees the The Learning Center at Sea Pines Resort.



© Photos by MDB Photography

The Technical Advantage

Technology Enhances the Human Touch at Sea Pines Resort

BY Sally J. Sportsman

Today more than ever, golf's greatest allure may be escaping to the great outdoors, far from the demands of business and corporate life. Golf resorts are going all out to meet and exceed the desires and expectations of their guests.

Some strategic decisions resort owners and operators must make involve technology. How should a resort determine the amount and kind of technology

used that guests experience? To what degree and in what ways should technology be integrated into the operational side of things?

Some golf destinations, such as Sea Pines Resort in Hilton Head, South Carolina, view these decisions as a delicate balance.

"We believe our guests should be able to fully experience golf," says Cary Corbitt, PGA, vice president of sports and operations at Sea Pines Resort and tournament chairman of the RBC Heritage, a PGA Tour event

played annually at Harbour Town Golf Links, one of three golf courses at Sea Pines. “Our golf carts do not have GPS installed, although they do have USB ports.

“Many players have their own yardage devices, and some choose to use none at all, for a more traditional round. At our Harbour Town course, forecaddies go with all resort groups and can upgrade to walking caddies.”

Caddies play an important role at Sea Pines in helping provide an old-fashioned golf experience. They not only offer yardages and shot selection advice, but also build relationships with guests, leading to lasting memories.

Technology is in play for guests long before they enter the gates, Corbitt says, in the advance research they do and in their online reservations and tee time selections. Most of the resort’s technology use, according to Corbitt, is in operations and maintenance.

“We use technology in all our retail programs; it’s a huge part of what we do, including tournaments and our golf shops,” he says. “We do \$4 million worth of retail sales each year, all managed by efficient technology and our staff, and all tied into accounting.”

Sea Pines utilizes management technology behind the scenes in a myriad of ways, according to Corbitt. Examples include tracking play and forecasting play, as well as planning maintenance strategies to provide top course conditions for guests. The technology in use at Sea Pines is extensive and essential, but only a portion of it is visible to guests.

“We are very traditional,” says Corbitt, “very much about the human touch. We do a lot of staff training, a high priority for us.”

Frequent staff interaction with guests and thoughtful use of technology throughout the resort combine to help Sea Pines accomplish its goal to create high guest satisfaction and repeat visitors as a result.

“It’s hard to surprise anyone; everybody is well versed in enhancements,” says John Farrell, PGA, director of golf at Sea Pines. “We want to make our guests feel like they are VIPs.

“You can’t go without the human touch.” Technology has greatly improved the ef-



Left: Student JT Herman demonstrates some of the tech used during a lesson. Sea Pines utilizes management technology in many ways. Examples are tracking play and forecasting play, as well as planning maintenance strategies to provide top course conditions for guests.

ficiency of management’s communications with staff, according to Farrell, although some in-person staff meetings still are held. Goals and objectives are compiled and communicated electronically.

“But that’s never a substitute for managers to be wandering around,” Farrell says.

While technology is not overly obvious to guests on the golf courses and at the many other activity venues around the resort, it is more evident to those making use of The Learning Center at Sea Pines Resort, overseen by Tim Cooke, PGA master professional, who maintains long-term relationships with students – often for years.

“Video instruction is a very important part of the program,” Cooke says. “We have an app that lets my clients send me video swings or any data they want; I do an analysis and maintain contact with them.”

About 75 percent of Cooke’s students are non-local; that is, they travel to see him for lessons or club fitting, often staying several nights at the resort. State-of-the-art technology used by the staff at The Learning Center includes 3D Doppler radar-based systems as well as pressure plates for kinetic-movement analysis.

“But all the tech we have is only as good as the person using it,” says Cooke. “My repeat customers come back because of the human touch, because you show you care.”

Most golfers who seek instruction at The Learning Center at Sea Pines are skilled

players, Cooke says, including accomplished juniors, collegians and some tour players. They tend to expect the highest level of technology for their game improvement, so it’s essential for the Learning Center to stay current in that regard.

“You have to budget for new technology every two years,” says Cooke, “just to maintain the coaching level and ability to diagnose a swing as quickly and efficiently as possible.”

About 25 percent of students at the Learning Center are women, according to Cooke; he sees no gender difference in comfort with technology. And 90 percent of his total clientele are repeat resort guests.

Cooke tells the story of a golfer who last took a lesson with him in 2016. The gentleman recently sent Cooke an email saying he was coming back. Upon his arrival, as he and Cooke were chatting, he pulled out his phone and showed his coach how he still reads his old notes about his swing.

“That’s the whole point,” Cooke says. 📱

Sally J. Sportsman is an Orlando, Florida-based freelance golf writer.

Sheep Ranch to Debut at Bandon Dunes resort

BY Sally J. Sportsman

Excitement is growing for what may be the most highly anticipated golf course opening for 2020. The tee sheet is full for opening day, June 1, at Sheep Ranch, an 18-hole coastal layout at Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, near Bandon, Oregon. Sheep Ranch will be the fifth course at this rural destination golf resort, perched 100 feet above the Pacific Ocean.

“The mystique of Sheep Ranch is due to what was there before,” says Steven Borrer, PGA, director of golf at Bandon Dunes. “There is a stampede to play the Sheep.”

What was there before was a course with 13 greens and no specific routing; golfers could play the holes in any order. The new 18-hole, par-71 layout, designed by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw, is the northernmost golf course at Bandon Dunes. Sheep Ranch has one mile of coastline, the most of any course at the resort. Nine greens overlook the sea and the other nine have ocean views.

“A lot of people understand the story of Bandon Dunes, which sits on the westernmost part of the continental United States and sticks out into the ocean,” Borrer says.

Since bookings opened for Sheep Ranch last October, reservations for the entire resort have doubled, according to Borrer. Expectations are for there to be a mix of clientele: those who want to add on another night and round, and others who will make different course selections each time they come, perhaps with more frequent visits. All the golf courses will have the same price per round to play.

“That’s one of the strengths of Bandon Dunes,” says Borrer. “We believe each course stands on its own merit.

“Our guests talk over dinner about which course they played that day.”

Tee times on opening day at Sheep Ranch have been pushed to begin at 6:20 a.m. instead of the usual 7, so players can finish their rounds before dark.

As a result of Sheep Ranch and the loyal customer base at Bandon Dunes, Borrer believes there definitely will be an increase in the number of future resort guests. More lodging may need to be built eventually.

A small clubhouse and a turn stand for food and beverage will open in conjunction with Sheep Ranch, according to Don Crowe, general manager of Bandon Dunes.

“And we will be adding to our caddy yard,” Crowe says. “Although caddies are not required at Sheep Ranch or our other courses, most golfers take them.

“There is a lot of buzz in the golf world about Sheep Ranch.”

Bandon Dunes is the site of the 2020 U.S. Amateur Championship to be played Aug. 10-16 on two golf courses. The other three, including Sheep Ranch, will be open for play during the tournament – no doubt resulting in even more future resort guests. 📱

Sally J. Sportsman is an Orlando, Florida-based freelance golf writer.

Reynolds Lake Oconee Adds Off-Course Driving

BY Sally J. Sportsman

A golf-resort vacation once meant bonhomie, multiple rounds with friends or family on pleasant, perhaps resplendent, layouts and delectable dining.

While that portrayal hasn't changed, more and more it is becoming only part of the equation. Golf resort owners and operators are discovering that diverse activities extend guest stays and attract new and repeat business. In fact, what seems to be emerging is robust competition among golf resorts to offer exciting pursuits to guests.

One destination exemplifying this trend is The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee, in Greensboro, Georgia, where off-road driving now joins the already enticing list of amenities.

"I would say that the industry is changing," says Sean Cain, PGA, director of golf instruction at the Reynolds Kingdom of Golf Presented by TaylorMade, at the resort. "From a golf trip standpoint, the days of playing a ton of golf and golfing yourself out are starting to dwindle.

"People are wanting to do other things in addition to golf."

The four off-road courses at Reynolds Lake Oconee, to open in March, are located at the Sandy Creek Sporting Grounds, owned by the resort. Shooting, archery, fishing, boating and hiking also are offered.

Justin Jones, director of the Sandy Creek Sporting Grounds, believes the appeal to golfers will be twofold. Off-course driving requires good hand-eye coordination, just like golf. And as an intriguing contrast to golf,

off-course drivers proceed through potholes – "the more, the merrier" – as well as water and other obstacles, rather than trying to avoid them.

The driving courses were built with novices to experienced drivers in mind. Up to three guests can be in each Land Rover at a time, always accompanied by a guide. Off-road course designer Bob Burns – "one of the top designers in the world," says Jones – will train the guides.

Resort guests can either drive to the Sporting Grounds or arrive by pontoon boat. There is one Land Rover Discovery now, but the resort is hoping to add a Land Rover Defender this spring.

"I think the off-road driving experience will be highly booked," Jones says. "I predict it will be 90 percent hotel guests and 10 percent members."

Two full-time employees man the Sporting Desk in the Ritz Carlton lobby, acting as a liaison between the Kingdom of Golf Presented by TaylorMade and the Sandy Creek Sporting Grounds.

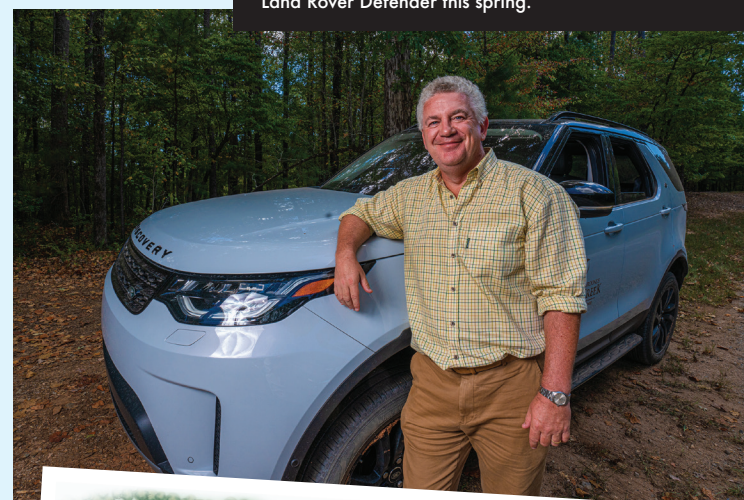
"Spreading the word about our amenities is important," Cain says. "The biggest challenge we face is that most people coming to the resort stay for a short time, mostly for corporate events; hopefully they will come back when they have more leisure time.

"As the industry changes, and as we are able to get the word out about our resort amenities, we are sitting in a good position to have a lot of success in the future."

Sally J. Sportsman is an Orlando, Florida-based freelance golf writer.



Below: Justin Jones, director of the Sandy Creek Sporting Grounds, believes the driving course will have an appeal to golfers. Resort guests can either drive to the Sporting Grounds or arrive by pontoon boat. There is one Land Rover Discovery now, but the resort is hoping to add a Land Rover Defender this spring.



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Dr. Bennett York and Paige York are the ultimate father-daughter duo overseeing the visionary course of Canebreak Country Club.



Practicing Visionary

Dr. Bennett York Saw Golf On His Land Even Though He Doesn't Play

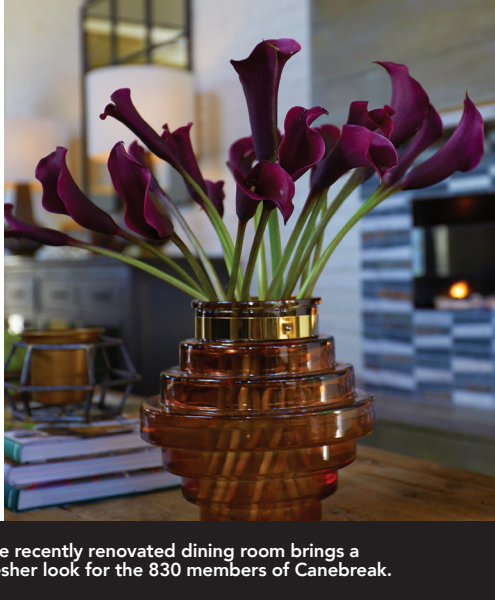
BY Steve Eubanks

It started with a love of water and dirt, a need to move and shape the earth and build large things after crafting a life in intricacies.

At age 78, Bennett York still performs oral surgery three days a week in his Hattiesburg, Mississippi, practice. He drills and sutures, rebuilds features and restores lives. Then he goes to his other life as one of the

most successful real estate developers in the Delta. But when the employees on the grounds crew at the country club he owns need oral care, Dr. York flips back to his first career, telling them to come on by the office on Monday or Tuesday. That's the kind of man he has always been, down-home, hard-working, flexible and always looking out for others.

He's also a visionary, a man who saw the course he visits almost daily on the ground before it ever existed,



The recently renovated dining room brings a fresher look for the 830 members of Canebreak.

even though he has never played the game.

“We’re place-makers,” Bennett’s daughter Paige York said of her father and the family business she’s been a part of since graduating from Harvard Business School in 1994. “Dad’s been practicing oral surgery for 50 years and he splits his time between the practice and the development business. He performs surgery three days a week and is in the development office the other two days plus weekends.”

The result is a multi-state business that includes office space, apartments, billboards, shopping centers, the Lowes in Hattiesburg, several self-storage facilities, high-end residential communities in Florida and Mississippi, and Canebrake Country Club, with a spa and multiuse clubhouse facility overlooking a Jerry Pate-designed championship golf course and a beautiful 250-acre lake.

The lake was how it all started.

“My dad started buying timberland 40

years ago,” Paige said. “And he began developing shopping centers and apartment complexes. But he loves lakes. He has four lake communities now. Canebrake started as a lake and then a development around a lake.”

As Dr. York surveyed the gentle topography and grand pines, a golf course entered his mind, even though neither Dr. York nor his daughter play.

“We’ve always been engaged in the work,” Paige said. “But we certainly thought the terrain was optimally suited for a golf course, so we started on a venture we’d never tried before.

“It was certainly a journey. But (the golf course) is centered around a magnificent brake of bamboo cane that is probably 30 feet tall. There’s not much else like it.”

Sometimes even a non-golfer can appreciate land that nature made specifically for the game. In the case of the Yorks, they knew they had something special.

“We try to create magical places for people to call home,” Paige said. “Whether

“We try to create magical places for people to call home”

— PAIGE YORK

it’s crafting a golf course out of the Mississippi woodlands or, as we have just done, creating a new clubhouse experience, we believe in quality. We just finished a massive renovation of the main dining room, so we were able to update and freshen it up.

“We have 830 members now, so it’s very robust. I helped with some of the marketing efforts and make sure that the club is presented in the way that reflects the quality we believe is part of who we are and everything that we’ve done.”

Dr. York is can be found there often. There are plenty of trophy bass in the big lake and two other smaller lakes on the golf course just waiting for his attention.

“It’s definitely a legacy property for us and we want it to be a special place for golfers and families to enjoy,” Paige said.

They’ve built a flexible-space campus in Nashville catering to creative entrepreneurs, and they have a senior-living facility in Delray Beach, Florida. But as Paige says of her father, “Lakes are his passion.”

That passion keeps the good doctor close to his golf course, one he might never play but one he was able to see before putting the first shovel in the ground. 🏌️

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.



©Photo by The Pebble Beach Company

By Steve Eubanks

Eastwood’s Tehama Hosts Controversial Sheriffs’ Outing

This one falls into the “no good deed goes unpunished” category. Almost everyone in the world knows Clint Eastwood. He has been an entertainment icon for more than 60 years. And at age 89, Eastwood shows no signs of slowing down. His biopic “Richard Jewell” was recognized as one of the top-10 films of 2019 with several of the cast being nominated for Academy Awards. But Eastwood is also a good citizen, having served as mayor of Carmel, California, and continuing to support local and national causes.

So, it should have surprised no one that when Monterey County (California) Sheriff Steve Bernal was selected to host the annual conference of the California Sheriffs’ Association, Eastwood, who owns Tehama Golf Club, offered to host the sheriffs and

their wives for golf and dinner. The event was a rousing success, as Tehama is one of the most exclusive and beautiful private clubs in the state, sitting on the shores of the Pacific near the cliffs of Monterey. The Jay Morrish-designed course is a perfect 6,500 yards long and the tasteful Spanish-designed homes adjacent to the course make you want to knock on the doors and ask the owners for a tour.

But a tour seems to be what caused a hiccup. Many of the sheriffs were driven around the county, from the beaches and shops in Monterey to the scenic 17-Mile Drive past Pebble Beach (where Mr. Eastwood is also a partial owner), to Tehama for the festivities. But some of those drivers were deputies who appear to have been paid overtime at the taxpayers’ expense.

Eastwood also allowed a fundraiser for Bernal to be hosted at Tehama, which further drew the club into the controversy.

The Deputy Sheriffs’ Association wrote a letter to the district attorney’s office stating that deputies were asked to drive rental vans while wearing polo shirts and that SWAT forces were used as security for the event.

Reasonable people understand that the owner of a host club can’t be held responsible for the transportation arrangements of his guests. But politics taints everything. The lesson to course owners from Clint Eastwood’s experience is, a good deed is still a good deed, but you better button up all the details. 🏌️

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.

By Steve Eubanks

Parsons Builds Value Through Xperience At Scottsdale National

Knowing what you want and having the means to afford it doesn't always mean the path is easy. When Bob Parsons, who made billions founding the internet domain hub GoDaddy, wanted the best golf equipment in the world, he found himself spending six figures a year on drivers, irons and wedges.

"Finally, I just said, why am I doing this? Just build the best clubs yourself," he said.

The result was Parsons Xtreme Golf (PXG), the highest of high-end equipment companies. But in its first generation, the PXG drivers were not, in fact, the best in the game. Some tour players left PXG staff because of the distance they lost off the tee while others camouflaged another manufacturer's driver to look like PXG until the problem could be resolved.

Mike Nicolette, a former PGA Tour player (who won the Bay Hill Invitational in 1983) and was Ping's lead designer before Parson's hired him away, was tasked with fixing the problem and designing the best driver out there. After several months, Nicolette brought Parson's a prototype and said, Bob, good news and bad news: The good news is, this is the best driver out there. The bad news is, we might not make money on it. Parsons looked at him, shrugged and said, "So?"

Which brings the story to the golf course Parsons purchased in 2013. Formerly called the Golf Club of Scottsdale and one of many struggling golf properties in the Arizona desert at the time, Parson scrapped the original membership offers, redesigned the



golf course, and built two new ones (including a devilishly difficult par-3 course) along with several clubhouses. He rebranded the entire property Scottsdale National. His total estimated investment in the property was \$300 million.

But again, wealth doesn't always fill needs and fix problems. It wasn't until years later when Parsons melded his two golf investments together that Scottsdale National became recognized around the world.

For just under \$18,000, golfers can engage in something called the PGX Xperience, a three-day immersion in the game that includes complete club fitting, instruction, and a practice and playing experience at Scottsdale National. Those who sign up are picked up at the Phoenix airport and delivered to the Four Seasons, which is across the street from the club's gates. They are then taken

into a golf wonderland, a place with service so over-the-top that you have no sooner hit a bunker shot and maintenance workers appear from the shrubbery like woodland nymphs to clean up after you.

At the far end of the 400-yard range is a PXG fitting professional, ready to help players who want the best to get perfectly fitted with clubs that could run them north of \$6,000 for a full set. Golf is included in the three days, as well as meals at the club, an experience that leaves most participants feeling like they got more than their money's worth no matter the price.

"These clubs are for those who can afford the best in everything they do and for people who aspire to that level," Parsons said.

His golf course operates under the same philosophy.

"There's only one rule here, and that's that no member shall ever get in the way of another member's good time," he said. "You can play golf in a t-shirt. You can talk on your cell phone. Just don't intrude on anybody else's time."

The membership is small and exclusive, but the reputation of the club has grown exponentially thanks to the PXG Xperience.

"More than anything, this place is for me," Parsons said. "I know I'll never get back all the money I've put into it, but that's fine. I've busted my chops all my life, and this is where I want to be."

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.

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Old Siasconset Golf Course
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South Region



Streamsong Resort
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Hickory Stick Golf Club

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Paul Porter Award

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Curt Walker
Former Executive Director, MWGCOA
(Kittie Fenlason accepted the award on behalf of Curt)

Watch all the winner videos at http://bit.ly/NGCOA_2020_Awards

Photos by Bert McLendon, texaseventphotography.com



beware of **BARTER**

New Research Report Shines Spotlight on Negative Fallout from Bartered Tee Times

By David Gould

Running 60-plus pages in length and representing months of collaborative work by a team of researchers, “Beware of Barter: The Ins and Outs of Trading Your Tee Times” was released by the National Golf Course Owners Association in mid-January to course operators and the industry generally.

It’s an in-depth, broadly sourced

white paper that explains from multiple angles how the apparently simple act of bartering tee times for digital services unleashes a complex series of economic repercussions, many of them disadvantageous to course operators.

Within the multifaceted relationship between course operators and the companies that supply software and perform third-party tee time selling, there is plenty more to see than just

barter, but within the report there’s an insistence on barter’s intense ripple effects.

“Take away barter and you would still have all the tug-of-war issues about customer engagement and loyalty,” contends Jay Karen, CEO of the NGCOA. “However, barter is what’s allowing the online tee time agents (OTTAs) to price golf as low as they choose – lower than what the regular rates are, as priced by

the course operators.”

The corollary of this statement is the assertion that, without barter, only the natural variables of supply and demand would impact pricing.

“Barter injects an unnatural and erroneous transference of pricing control to a party with different interests than the golf course itself,” Karen says. “This is the steroid that strengthens discounting and weakens the business.”

It’s often been said that prices dramatically below rack rate aren’t desirable for the OTTAs. Once in possession of a bartered tee time, they could have no other motivation than to sell it for the highest price possible. Except there is indeed a competing motivation, driving golfer traffic to the OTTA website and booking engine – extreme bargain prices have been relied on to deliver that benefit.

The report, available for download at ngcoa.org/BewareOfBarter, takes a chronological approach in its early going, working to explain how course operators ended up with an imbalanced relationship to OTTAs and a scrambled relationship with their own customers – all due to the Pandora’s box that tee time bartering represents. Material gathered to build this argument includes in-depth case studies from course management groups in Florida and Arizona, a GOLF USA Tee Time Coalition Market Sentiment Study, two academic papers on tee time pricing, plus data and media reporting about prices and booking in the hospitality industry.

It was the 2018 sentiment study that seemed to confirm the need to train a bright light on barter. It revealed, according to Karen, that “the industry has a very complicated, love-hate relationship with the barter method of

compensation for technology and tee time distribution.”

Driving the hate side of the relationship is the sense of lost pricing power and muddled customer relations, Karen explains.

“We firmly believe,” he states, “that the barter economy is allowing for deep, unnecessary and erroneous discounting of golf, as well as aggressive disintermediation with customers that golf courses have worked decades to cultivate.”

How did we get here?

It’s sometimes forgotten that OTTAs and vendors of golf management software (GMS) weren’t initially inclined to accept



“Third-party tee time sites ... have trained millions of golfers to shop for a price first. With that, golfers have gained a reference-price-effect perspective that golf is too expensive.”

– NGCOA REPORT

bartered times in exchange for their services. Instead this throwback to agrarian economies was an arrangement of convenience or even necessity, based on the number of courses that coveted the new digital resources but couldn't afford them. Harvey Silverman, a veteran golf marketer and co-founder of Quick.golf, served as lead author of the NGCOA report. Silverman has seen few if any scenarios in which the law of unintended consequences came down as harshly on a marketplace as it does in this case.

"To put it simply, paying with cash instead of tee times eliminates nearly every issue we describe in the document," Silverman states.

"There is a place in the market for OTTAs. They serve a purpose of convenience for golfers looking for a tee time.... But the business relationship has to be fair and equitable, and we have lots of data and testimony to prove it hasn't been for many, many golf courses."

What's a tee time worth?

One of the core questions examined in the report is how much value is given up on either side of these barter transactions. When open tee times are traded for software and/or expanded marketing of tee-sheet inventory, is one side or the other advantaged? To answer definitively would require that a dollar value be assigned to what the course and the vendor/marketer each bring to the table.

The dollar value for the proffered tee time is particularly elusive, but chapter one of "Beware of Barter" walks step-by-step through an arithmetic formula to produce concrete answers. Readers can turn this portion of the report into a workbook of sorts, running the numbers relevant to their own facilities to arrive at a quantitative statement of what they are giving up. In tandem with the inquiry into what bartered tee times are truly worth, the report considers the "opportunity cost of barter," by crunching through yet another formula. The report can be

"There are real issues that pop up at the golf course counter that can and do create issues and confrontations between the golfer and the operator,"

- BEWARE OF BARTER SURVEY RESPONDENT

read as a treatise on consumer perceptions of value in a golf experience as well as consumer behavior in and around the purchase of a tee time. The second chapter, "Price Elasticity and Golf," probes this topic thoughtfully, using academic research produced by Drs. Cathy Enz and Linda Canina of the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University. Their writings include this finding, which for many would be counterintuitive:

"Demand for golf is primarily price-inelastic, suggesting that a price drop will not have a significant impact on demand and [thus] revenue will decrease."

Also in that chapter is baseline information on "reference price" effects, or what others have called an "anchor" in the consumer's mind as to what they should rightly expect to pay. "Third-party tee time sites such as GolfNow, TeeOff, Golf18 Network, Last Minute Tee Times and others have trained millions of golfers to shop for a price first," the NGCOA authors claim. "With that, golfers have gained a reference-price-effect perspective that golf is too expensive."

[Editor's note: Announcement of teeoff.com coming under the GolfNow umbrella, through the latter's acquisition of EZLinks Golf, came just prior to publication of the NGCOA report.]

It has been widely and credibly asserted that barter and aggregated selling have caused the product represented by a round of golf at any particular course to become commoditized. By its nature, that product doesn't commoditize well. Imagine that, instead of a tee time being handed over in lieu of cash, it was a roll of fairway sod cut from the course's turf nursery. An end user would view it strictly on its merits, independent of where it came from. This simply cannot be the case with a product so "native" and so richly experiential as a tee time on a golf course. The end user of a traded round, as "Beware of Barter" points out, scarcely recognizes that the product has changed hands once previously, before he or she purchased it.



This conundrum is best expressed in a survey write-in comment that the report prominently quotes. The course operator who provided it begins by lamenting that bartered inventory isn't segregated to a special site where golfers viewing it would see disclaimers pointing out the otherwise unseen barter transaction.

"There are real issues that pop up at the golf course counter that can and do create issues and confrontations between the golfer and the operator," notes the survey respondent. "Rain checks, aeration issues, double-booked times and golfers showing up early or late for their bartered times are just a few of the issues that are created when bartered times and non-bartered times appear simultaneously on the same page."

Learning from the Hospitality Industry

Indeed, the mere existence of golf aggregation sites goes against the nature of the product – an 18-hole outdoor recreational experience based on venerated, 400-year-old customs – in ways that could never apply to seats in an airplane or motels along the interstate. The latter section of "Beware of Barter" contains thought-provoking comparisons to the



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Published by the National Golf Course Owners Association – Beware of Barter: The Ins and Outs of Trading Your Tee Times – go online to ngcoa.org/BewareOfBarter

Middle: Harvey Silverman a veteran golf marketer and co-founder of Quick.golf, served as lead author of the NGCOA report and moderator of the panel discussion at the Golf Business Conference in January. The panelists were Jared Williams, managing director of the Golf USA Tee Time Coalition; Ian Versaw, national sales director for Club Prophet; and Golf Brevard General Manager Mike Yurigan.



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COVER STORY

“To isolate PoS bartering as the sole factor in the turnaround would be a huge mistake. However, having the courage to walk away from it was an important step in our initial success.”

- TOM BECKER

hospitality industry and its relationship to third-party booking sites, including some fairly recent redrawing of lines between the hotel companies and the likes of Expedia and Travelocity.

Lead author Silverman, summarizing the chapter on lessons golf can learn from the lodging industry, notes that barter-avoiding golf courses still face challenges in their partnerships with OTTAs.

“Even though hotels pay cash in the form of commission,” he says, “they still must contend with

how their properties are marketed. The critical factor is ownership of the customer, and building loyalty with them so they are visiting and reserving on the hotel website rather than the third-party site.”

Earlier on, in the report’s third chapter, “Rate Integrity and Parity - Protecting Your Brand,” there’s a summary statement echoing that sentiment. “Golf course operators need to consider,” it says, “whether a third party should be allowed to have this much influence over their pricing and overall product image.”

Control and influence of this sort spirals up from the basic premise of tee times being exiled from the tee sheet that is their natural home and transformed into a promotional tool serving an entirely different type of business. What began as a workaround eventually took on embellishments that, according to the report, deepened discounts off of rack rate – the report states it thusly:

“OTTAs have created a highly competitive landscape to gain customers. They will enhance their offerings to golfers beyond ‘hot deals’ or the like, offering flash discounts, loyalty clubs, free passes and subscription services.... The result is that OTTAs are routinely circumnavigating even the lowest agreed-upon resale price of tee times with golf course operators and causing confusion for the golfing customers.”

The report moves from this observation to a direct question to the reader:

“Do the OTTAs generate revenues for you by selling

bartered tee times? Perhaps, but do these revenues cover the additional costs of such an arrangement beyond ‘goods for services,’ including rate erosion, customer disintermediation, and search engine competition?”

Take that to the bank

While to many the cash-flow relief that barter provides is too valuable to give up, to others barter is a practice that needs to be jettisoned. In “Beware of Barter,” two in-depth cases describe how the cord can be cut and what gains can be realized through doing so. There’s an MCO (multi-course operator) success story as well as a success story about a two-course municipal golf operation.

The latter is Golf Brevard Inc., a non-profit Florida corporation led by local golfer and CEO Tom Becker. Golf Brevard recently overhauled its operating approach including discontinuance of tee time bartering. The business turned a corner and is poised for further success.

“To isolate PoS bartering as the sole factor in the turnaround would be a huge mistake,” says Becker. “However, having the courage to walk away from it was an important step in our initial success.”

What golfers pay to play and how they define value in the tee time marketplace is a thorny issue that elicits opinions and commentary from many quarters. The NGCOA report doesn’t attempt to settle all debates on the topic, but its fusillade of arguments and analytics concerning barter make it highly difficult to deny the need for a rethink of that payment mechanism by anyone who’s ever used it. **7B**

David Gould is a Massachusetts-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to Golf Business.



2020
Golf Industry
Calendar

For more events, including ngcoa chapter happenings, visit ngcoa.org. To add your national event to this calendar, contact Boots Gifford at bgifford@ngcoa.org.

MAY 5-6
National Golf Day
Washington, D.C.
wearegolf.org/national-golf-day

JULY 21-22
MCOR20
Charleston, South Carolina
Multi-course/Resort operator retreat
ngcoa.org

AUGUST 18-19
PGA Fashion & Demo Experience
Las Vegas, Nevada
pgalasvegas.com

**SEPTEMBER 30-
OCTOBER 1**
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CBD | *SPECIAL REPORT*

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“(Golfers are) a
perfect alignment.”

-JAY HARTENBACH



Two-time Masters champion Bubba Watson and four-time PGA Tour winner Charley Hoffman, who endorse cbdMD and Medterra.

Guilt by association?

CBD FIGHTING BAD RAP FROM MISINFORMATION

BY SCOTT
KAUFFMAN

Like many movies these days, sequels are all the rave. And one of the latest storylines sweeping the nation can be called CBD Madness. Of course, this is a reference to the not-so-classic movie from 1936, *Reefer Madness*.

To be sure, 83 years after the Marihuana Tax Act of 1937 made the hemp/marijuana plant illegal in America, it is no longer madness to view marijuana as part of the mainstream. How else can one explain in January 2020 Illinois becoming the 11th state to make recreational marijuana legal for adults over the age of 21? And the fact that 33 states already allow marijuana for medical purposes?

Meanwhile, buzz over hemp remains just as hot for another product of the cannabis plant: CBD. To be clear, while CBD or cannabidiol comes from the same plant as marijuana, CBD is not legally defined as marijuana per the federal government so long as it contains .03 milligrams or less of THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol), which is the

psychoactive compound often associated with hemp or marijuana.

This year's 67th PGA Merchandise Show was illustrative of how popular CBD is getting among professional and amateur golfers, with more than a dozen exhibitors selling and showcasing some form of the compound in various forms of tinctures, creams and gums – tripling the number of CBD-related exhibitors found in 2019.

Among the companies this year were names like Double Eagle Hemp, Medterra Golf, PureSwing CBD and ParForm. To see this fast-growing product pop up in golf makes perfect sense seeing that golfers are always open to that hot new piece of equipment or product that can seemingly give them a mental or physical edge.

Numerous professional golfers are openly using CBD-related products and touting their benefits, including two-time Masters champion Bubba Watson and four-time PGA Tour winner Charley Hoffman, who endorse cbdMD and Medterra, respectively. This is

only fueling the curiosity and demand. This type of high-profile validation is one reason Medterra CEO Jay Hartenbach is so bullish on the golf industry.

“(Golfers are) a perfect alignment,” says Hartenbach, whose company's products can be found in 300-plus golf facilities, not to mention PGA Tour Superstore and Worldwide Golf Shops. “There's zero THC in our products, which is a huge thing. That's getting professional golfers on board and comfortable using the product (for Tour compliance purposes).”

“It's also helped being able to partner with national golf retailers because they're comfortable knowing our products contain no THC. It's almost one of the things that gets us in the door. What keeps people around is actually using the product and seeing the benefits.”

For decades, many people have incorrectly associated hemp with the psychoactive derivative of the cannabis plant and commonly categorized all of

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hemp as simply marijuana or “pot.” So, hemp had that stigma and connection to a drug that became illegal on a federal level once Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the tax act in August 1937.

However, CBD is merely one of numerous compounds that can be extracted from the centuries-old hemp plant and does not get you high. In fact, hemp used to be legal to grow in America throughout the 18th and 19th centuries and was commonly used for products such as paper, lamp fuels and ropes.

But hemp became hip after Pres. Donald J. Trump signed the bipartisan Farm Bill in December 2018, which legalized the production and use of hemp once again.

Consequently, cannabis producers and practitioners are popping up everywhere like weeds – touting the anti-inflammatory and calming nature of CBD to name a couple benefits.

Longtime PGA Professional and golf store owner Mark Clavey, who is in his 20th year running the 4,000-square-foot retail shop in Illinois called Chicago Bills Golf, tried and researched a multitude of CBD gums, lotions and lip balms at this year's PGA Merchandise Show. In sifting through all the marketing pitches and trying to determine which ones seem to be the most legitimate, Clavey landed on two that he plans to try this season: Natural Native CBD and Medterra.

“It's popular for sure,” says Clavey, whose shop is part of the popular Green Valley Golf Range with 25 heated bays, 40 grass hitting stations and Toptracer technology.

“I think it's got some mileage. I'm getting on the ground floor so that helps (sell it). Eventually, you'll be able to get this everywhere,” he says.

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of Aloha Media Group.

11

The number of states with legalized marijuana

33

The number of states that allow medical marijuana

CBD is not legally defined as marijuana per the federal government so long as it contains .03 milligrams or less of THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol), which is the psychoactive compound often associated with hemp or marijuana.



Nathan Phillips, of Asheville, North Carolina-based Amazing Grace Hemp Co. who moderated the CBD 101 panel discussion at the Golf Business Conference in January.



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CBD business playing the name game

BY SCOTT KAUFFMAN

The Great White Shark is the latest golf celebrity to take a bite out of the booming CBD business. The Shark, of course, is Hall of Fame golfer Greg Norman

Norman announced in October the launch of his exclusive new line of CBD-infused wellness and recovery products and was in full marketing tilt at this year's PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando talking about his new products "geared towards men and women who lead an active lifestyle."

Norman's products, now available in Simon Malls throughout the country, is a licensing partnership between GGB Beauty LLC, a subsidiary of Green Growth Brands, and Authentic Brands Group, which co-owns the golfer's trademarked name.

According to the partnership, the famous Aussie golfer's new products are made with hemp-derived CBD (cannabidiol) and combined with a variety of natural Australian ingredients such as Tasmanian blue gum for soothing relief, Kunzea oil for sore muscle relief and Australian Sea Salt for total body relaxation.

"I played professional golf for 40 years and continue to lead an extremely active lifestyle," Norman said. "Hitting millions of golf balls in a lifetime can – and will – cause strain and injury on anyone's body, despite their age or physical wellbeing."

"Wellness is a pillar in my life and I believe that the health benefits of these products, cultivated from top-quality ingredients found in my birthplace of Australia, will benefit those who spend time on the golf course and anyone committed to prioritizing self-care."

To be sure, Norman is just the latest in a line of well-known golfers, let alone other celebrity athletes, hopping on the CBD bandwagon for both business and personal health-related reasons.

Besides Norman, other well-known golfers endorsing CBD-related companies are two-time Masters champion Bubba Watson, 2009 U.S. Open



Left: Bubba Watson. Right: Medterra booth at the 2020 PGA Merchandise Show marketing event.

“Hitting millions of golf balls in a lifetime can – and will – cause strain and injury on anyone’s body, despite their age or physical well-being.” –MORGAN HOFFMANN

champ Lucas Glover and four-time PGA Tour winner Charley Hoffman to name a few.

"Everybody is curious and at least 90 percent have tried it," says PGA Tour golfer and Medterra user Morgan Hoffmann, who gave testimonials at this year's PGA Merchandise Show during a marketing event at the Medterra booth moderated by fellow Medterra user and Golf Channel TV personality Matt Ginella. "It's blowing up. You can see it."

Celebrity status notwithstanding, what makes CBD popular and not just a fad is the fact it works, according to so many users. At least that's Hoffmann's opinion after being diagnosed with rare Facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy and finally finding some relief for his aching sore shoulder thanks to Medterra's topical cooling cream. Watson also believes in the hemp plant compound for its calming and anti-inflammatory qualities and talks about CBD extending his longevity in sports.

"We think of Bubba as one of cbdMD's

most passionate supporters and consumer educators," says cbdMD chief marketing officer Ken Cohn. "He brings incredible energy and candor to the conversation about the many CBD applications for pro athletes, amateurs, and non-athletes alike. ... cbdMD's retail sales are on a consistent upward trend, which we have to closely monitor for production, warehousing and distribution purposes. It's a good problem to have, of course, and our team does an incredible job keeping up with that increased demand."

"As for the future, we anticipate a continued rise in demand for our products as our education initiatives continue to reach larger audiences. That's especially the case as it pertains to people aged 55-plus. Surveys indicate they're the least aware of CBD and its applications, which is interesting since active, health-conscious seniors may find our products particularly useful." **TK**

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of Aloha Media Group

FDA rulings raise questions on CBD promotions

BY SCOTT KAUFFMAN

Marketing mania surrounding the hemp plant's high-profile curative compound, cannabidiol or CBD, is starting to catch the attention of the feds – the Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Department of Agriculture to be specific.

After the U.S. government passed the 2018 Farm Bill in December 2018, making hemp production legal after an 80-year hiatus, growers, entrepreneurs and businesses are making a mad dash to hop on this hot, new health and wellness trend, marketing and selling the therapeutic value of cannabidiol from stress and anxiety relief to various qualities as it relates to relieving pain and other ailments. These CBD-infused products are even making their way into pet-related products, touting a multitude of similar health-related benefits.

"CBD is the rock star (compound) and everybody is promoting it," says Nathan Phillips of Asheville, North Carolina-based Amazing Grace Hemp Co., an early adopter of the hemp plant's various health and wellness qualities. "That's what gets people's attention."

Is this form of hemp just hype? For consumers, who to believe and what? That's where the FDA fits into the fast-moving marketing landscape.

For now, there are no standards or regulations to speak of as it relates to the marketing of CBD. That's because many of the CBD products being sold don't fall under the purview of the FDA. At least, that's until

CBD or the other well-known psychoactive compound, THC, is "added to a food or cosmetic, marketed as a drug or, otherwise added to an FDA-regulated product in interstate commerce," FDA Commissioner Ned Sharpless said during a well-attended public hearing last May.

Sharpless added: "You may have noticed that cannabidiol (CBD) seems to be available almost everywhere, and marketed as a variety of products including drugs, food, dietary supplements, cosmetics and animal health products. Other than one prescription drug product to treat two rare, severe forms of epilepsy, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved any other CBD products, and there is very limited available information about CBD, including about its effects on the body."

Nevertheless, hemp plant production is booming as a legal agricultural crop, with 2019 licenses for hemp cultivation topping a half-million acres, more than 450 percent above 2018 levels, according to government reports. But just like the FDA, the USDA is raising concerns among farmers, processors and retailers if federal policymakers move forward with proposed new draft regulations to ensure the THC-free purity of hemp being grown in the 46 states that currently allow this crop to be grown.

Most of the anxiety involves how the federal government plans to test for THC, the high-inducing compound found in both of the cannabis plants, marijuana and hemp. The federal government and most states consider plants with tiny amounts of THC – 0.3 percent or less – to be hemp. Anything with higher concentrations is defined as marijuana and illegal under federal law.

The FDA is concerned that people may mistakenly believe that trying CBD "can't hurt." The agency wants to be clear that it has seen only limited data about CBD's safety and it says this data points to real risks that need to be considered. As part of the drug review and approval process for the prescription drug containing CBD, it was determined that the risks are outweighed by the benefits of the approved drug for

the particular population for which it was intended. Consumer use of any CBD products should always be discussed with a health care provider. Consumers should be aware of the potential risks associated with using CBD products, states the FDA.

Attorney Rod Kight of Asheville, North Carolina, a personal user of CBD products and one of the country's leading experts on the industry, says FDA oversight is a "significant issue" in how the product is going to be marketed and sold going forward.

"I believe that the FDA is likely to create a narrow pathway for the lawful use of CBD as a food ingredient and/or dietary supplement," Kight told Golf Business in a written statement. "With respect to hemp extracts that contain CBD among other phytonutrients (other cannabinoids, terpenes, sesquiterpenes, etc.), I expect that the FDA will maintain its posture of continuing to utilize the term 'CBD' while not making a distinction between food products formulated with purified CBD 'isolate' and products formulated with hemp extract that contains CBD. In other words, 'hemp extract' will remain in a legal grey zone for the foreseeable future."

That's one reason Phillips is already adjusting how he plans to market and sell CBD-related products.

"My companies have been shifting to the approach of removing the term 'CBD' from products and buying products (or encouraging vendors) that do not have CBD directly on the label as it will eventually be heavily regulated, especially for any type of food, capsule or orally ingested product," says Phillips, who participated in a CBD panel at this year's NGCOA Golf Business Conference in Orlando. "This is why education is so important for consumers and shopkeepers alike - knowing the different types of CBD, the science behind the product, and how to communicate that to others is critical for success in every arena." **TK**

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of Aloha Media Group.



Eye Rolling Five Ways to Keep the Conversation Rolling

By: Dr. Marcia Reynolds

“I can handle when they talk back to me,” the HR director said, “but when they roll their eyes, it just gets under my skin.”

“I know,” said the training manager. “I have an intern who does amazing work, but when I try to give him some direction, the eye roll makes me explain myself far more than I normally would. I feel I have to defend myself when I’m just stating a clear expectation.”

“It’s not just the younger employees,” the director added. “I get the smirk and sideways glance from one of my most senior specialists. If I ask if she disagrees with me, or disapproves of my approach, she says, ‘Oh no, I see what you mean’ and acts as if she is the most agreeable person around.”

“I think we need to address how eye rolling impacts our communications. But I bet they roll their eyes if we suggest it!”

How to react when you notice eye rolling

Most people emotionally react when someone rolls their eyes. The gesture is seen as a non-verbal judgment of your words. If you ask about the gesture, eye rollers generally deny they did anything disrespectful.

Whether in a business meeting or an informal conversation, the last thing you want to do is angrily respond to eye rolling. If you stay curious instead of defensively reacting, you might find out what is underneath the eye roll. This could be your chance to connect by showing you care about the person’s opinion.

For example, during a tense discussion, you might be focused on making your point heard. You want to influence thinking. Eye rolling might indicate you have pressed too hard. You might back off and sincerely ask the eye roller to share his or her perspective.

You want the person to surface their anger and frustration, to feel safe enough to vent. You need to hear what they think is missing or what they

feel they aren’t getting in the moment. Even if you can’t give them what they want, it is better they feel heard instead of ignored.

So, instead of checking out or having a knee-jerk reaction to eye rolling, notice your urge to defend, reprimand or shut off from someone for eye rolling. Then follow these five steps to engage them in the conversation.

Encourage eye rollers to express what is on their mind

1. Exhale your stress and recall feelings of respect and care for the person as best you can. Shift to wondering why they are resisting what you are offering. Even if you can’t feel good about the eye roller, at least calmly (and genuinely) ask, “Would you please tell me what you think I have done or what I’m not hearing from you?” Then listen silently, resisting the urge to defend yourself.

2. Even if it takes prompting, encourage eye rollers to vent. Venting is a way to release frustration. If you accept their words without making them wrong, they might feel you care about their point of view. In fact, letting people vent not only allows them to release their feelings, but you can find what they really want or what is causing them to feel the way they do if you listen. Then, once they feel heard, they will be more willing to try to understand your point of view.

Flip their resistance into participation

3. Summarize what the person tells you and ask for confirmation. Don’t analyze what they say, just share what you hear. Say things like, “I think you are saying...,” “I see you are upset because you think...,” “I now understand that you think the decision was made based on these factors...” Let people tell you what you got right and correct you if you are off. They must feel heard before the conversation can move forward.

4. Shift their frustration from blame to desire. Once they feel you are listening, ask them what they need to so they feel their ideas or contribution is valued.

Ask questions like:

5. “What has you most frustrated right now?”

6. “What do you need that you feel you aren’t getting from me or other people?”

7. “Do you have some ideas we can work on together?”

8. “What would you like to see people stop doing, and what would you like to see happen instead?”

Agree on what the desired outcome is.

You may not agree now on the best way to move forward but if you want the same end result, you might find a way to integrate some of their ideas. Agree, negotiate or explain your point of view in light of their concerns keeping in mind what they think should happen as an end result. If they aren’t ready to provide an answer, ask if you can come back to the conversation after giving the situation some thought.

Don’t let eye rolling get by you. Eye rollers have something on their mind. See if you can get them to express their views. Show you value their perspective. Integrate their ideas as best you can.

“I discovered something today,” the HR director said. “Eye rolling could be a way of getting my attention, not pushing me away.”

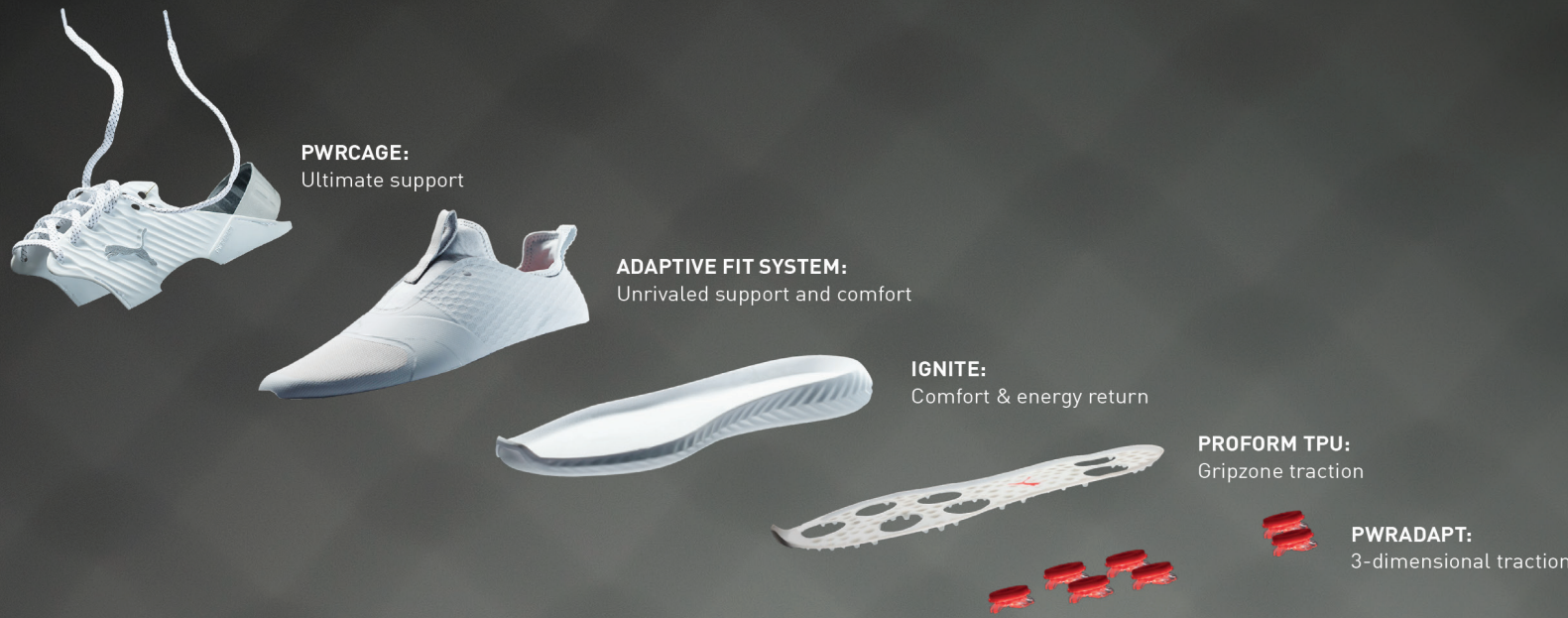
“Thanks!” the training manager said. “That bit of wisdom could help me with my teenager.”

Vincent Van Gogh said, “Let’s not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives, and we obey them without realizing it.”

Catch your reactions to eye rolling. It’s your chance to show them you care about what they think. **7B**

Dr. Marcia Reynolds is an award-winning author and world-renowned expert on how leaders inspire change through conversations. She has spoken at conferences and taught workshops in 41 countries on leadership and transformational coaching. Read more at Covisioning.com.

“...during a tense discussion, you might be focused on making your point heard. You want to influence thinking. Eye rolling might indicate you have pressed too hard. You might back off and sincerely ask the eye roller to share his or her perspective.”



C A G E D

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A Look Back: 2000

Hutt Winning the Long Game with Service

By: Doug McPherson

Judy Hutt tells the story of two regulars sitting in their favorite seats in the clubhouse after league play sipping beers. “You know Judy,” one of the men offers, “you ought to make these our designated chairs as much as we sit in them.”

“Maybe,” Hutt replies sharing their chuckles.

The next week when the men returned, they found small plaques on the backrests – bearing their names.

Some might call that amazing customer focus, but at Shadow Valley Golf Course near Boise, Idaho, it’s par for the course and vintage Hutt, the course’s general manager and owner.

Actually, she calls it touch marketing – the kind that spurs word-of-mouth advertising. And the chair story has joined the flood of other word-of-mouth jewels: the occasional on-the-house beers, the dependable pace of play, and coffee, cookies and brandy hand-delivered to players. Hutt’s happy to spend money on all of it over newspaper ads.

“We rely on 100 percent word-of-mouth,” says Hutt, who appeared on the cover of the May 2000 issue of Golf Business. Her allegiance to customers may explain her longevity in the golf business – 43 years.

She says the time-tested lesson that has worked best over all those years is knowing the customer. Her customer focus is literal



Above: Featured on the cover, Judy Hutt Shadow Valley Golf Course near Boise, Idaho. Below: During the winter Judy in Arizona but never takes a break from the golf course life.



“Know customers, their expectations and then meet or exceed those expectations. It’s about building relationships ... and service, service, service.”

– JUDY HUTT

– from the minute players park until they depart, Hutt’s watching. And what she’s notices is this: “People come happy ... to have fun.” Her job: Keep them happy.

“Know customers, their expectations and then meet or exceed those expectations. It’s about building relationships ... and service, service, service.”

That comes naturally for Hutt. “I’ve always loved people. You have to enjoy doing it. I think it’s fun to exceed someone’s expectation.”

When she isn’t wowing customers, she’s dreaming up ideas to wow them more. One of her best: \$1 a hole after league play. She also started a ladies’ social shotgun for \$30 per person. Both sell out weekly and

both reflect Hutt’s view of golf’s own tough course ahead.

“We’re losing golfers, especially baby boomers. We need more women players. It’s our responsibility to build the game – to get more players.”

Hutt says getting those players has come more easily with the help of her staff, particularly her director of operations and superintendent, Kevin Wolf. “I have a great team,” she says.

Hutt expects to keep doling out her talk-inducing service at least three more years when her course hits its 50th anniversary.

“I’ll keep working as long as I enjoy it.”

Doug McPherson is a freelance writer in Denver, Colorado.



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www.swanlakeresort.com Contact Kevin Smith, 574-935-5680 x 711,

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Waynesville Inn Resort and Spa

Waynesville, NC
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1) Do you wish to receive/continue to receive *Golf Business* FREE?

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2) Which one option best characterizes your organization? (check one only)

- 01 ☐ Golf Course Facility/Group of Facilities
02 ☐ Off-Course Golf Retailer
03 ☐ Golf Industry Manufacturer/Vendor/Distributor
04 ☐ Golf Course Consultant

3) What one option most closely matches your job function/title? (select one only)

- 01 ☐ President/CEO
02 ☐ Owner/Operator
03 ☐ Chairman of the Board
04 ☐ CFO/Financial Manager
05 ☐ General Manager
06 ☐ Club Manager
07 ☐ Director of Golf
08 ☐ Executive/National/Regional Director/Manager
09 ☐ Purchasing Manager/Buyer
10 ☐ Golf Professional
11 ☐ Golf Superintendent
12 ☐ Member, Board of Directors
13 ☐ Marketing/Sales Manager/Director
15 ☐ Other (please specify) _____

4) Which one best describes the nature of your organization?

(select one only)

- 10 ☐ Private
11 ☐ Privately-Owned Daily Fee
12 ☐ Semi-Private
13 ☐ Resort
14 ☐ Municipal/State/County
16 ☐ Military
17 ☐ University/College
18 ☐ Driving Range/Practice Facility
20 ☐ Development Company
28 ☐ Golf Course Builder
21 ☐ Other (please specify) _____
21 ☐ Not Applicable

5) Are you affiliated with a golf course management company?

01 ☐ yes 02 ☐ no

6) How many facilities, in total, are you personally responsible for?

- 80 ☐ less than 2 83 ☐ 10 or more
81 ☐ 2 - 4 99 ☐ Not applicable
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News from the National Golf Course Owners Association

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2020

NGCOA In Action

ADVOCACY



Power in Numbers: 100s of Your Golf Industry Peers Will Be at National Golf Day 2020 Registration is Now Open... Join Us!

Support your own business and the golf industry as a whole! Attend the 13th annual National Golf Day on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, May 6, 2020, with the annual Community Project scheduled for May 5 (so plan to arrive early!) Coordinated by a coalition of the game's leading associations and industry partners under the banner of WE ARE GOLF, National Golf Day brings together more than 300 industry leaders from across the U.S. to support the game's \$84.1 billion economy, nearly \$4 billion annual charitable impact, close to 15,000 diverse businesses and two million jobs impacted.

If you have questions, or would like to join other NGCOA members at this critical event, learn more at wearegolf.org/national-golf-day or email Ronnie Miles, NGCOA's Director of Advocacy, at rmiles@ngcoa.org.



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COMMUNITY



What are Other NGCOA Members Talking About on Accelerate?

Did you know there are Accelerate Members-Only Communities you can join, based on your interests, needs and engagement with NGCOA? Visit accelerate.ngcoa.org to read more about and add to the discussion of critical issues in golf business.

- Accelerate (General) Community for all NGCOA members
- Supplier Community for NGCOA's Corporate Members
- Advocacy Issues & Alerts
- Golf Business RevCon/TechCon and Golf Business Conference for event attendees
- Trading Post where members can buy and sell used equipment

Here is a sample of recent discussions; reply to these, or post your own for member feedback!



Loyalty Programs for Private Clubs

Are there any private golf clubs out there that offer anything like a loyalty program, and how has it affected your facility?

Simulator Recommendations

We are preparing to remodel our clubhouse to accommodate simulators. Please advise on any lessons you've learned from construction/room design to purchasing a simulator.

Increase Afternoon/Evening Play at Private Clubs

What are some things we could do as a private facility to get more people here in the afternoons?

Food Trucks and F&B Popups

I am looking for courses that have made successful use of food trucks—whether just one or a "rodeo"—or other "popup" type F&B offering.

Impact From Municipal Golf Courses

Is anyone experiencing any impact from municipal golf courses? Has anyone been able to initiate contact with your local municipal leadership that has helped with a situation like this?

Cart Path Repair Ideas

We have a significant number of rough areas on our 5+ miles of cart paths, particularly in areas with surface drainage issues. What 'in-house hacks' have you all discovered that are the most cost-effective ways to fix the bad areas with the longest-term results?



I have not only learned so much from the members in this [Accelerate] community, but have saved a measurable amount of money taking a deep dive (constantly stalking current and past posts.) I have used so much from what I've learned here! Thank you all for taking the time to share!

SANDRA WECKERLY, GENERAL MANAGER, REDLANDS MESA GOLF CLUB, GRAND JUNCTION, CO



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