

Where Do You Think You're Going?

Scott MacCallum talks to signage companies about the good, the bad and the ugly.

How many of us have teed it up on a course we've never played before, got out to the edge of a green having three putted yet again only to find ourselves lost, unsure of where the next tee is? Or worse still, taken it a bit further, and played the wrong hole?

As grown adults we do feel a little bit silly. Surely it can't be so complicated? We know that the 2nd tee is fairly near the 1st green and the 3rd near the 2nd so on all the way round to the 18th, and hopefully the 19th but so many of us find ourselves aimlessly searching around for the next tee that something must be wrong.

Surely it can't be beyond the wit of man to come up with a solution.

Well there is one. It's called the "sign" That's "S", "I", "G", "N" and although they are catching on there are still many clubs which could make much more use of them to help golfers around their courses.

How simple it would be for clubs to provide a sign at all holes where the next tee is not obvious just as a consideration for those visitors and guests who are playing the course for the first time.

Additionally, and perhaps even more importantly, signs warning golfers of possible danger – "Caution. Possible stray balls from opposite fairway" or "Don't play until adjacent green is clear".

Rebecca McGuire, of Eagle Promotions, also highlighted the benefit of temporary signs, like 'Spraying in Progress' to warn golfers that a course maintenance practice is being carried out, which brings to mind the age old warning, 'Golfers should refrain from licking their balls'.

These signs do help if legal actions is pending following an accident as it does demonstrate that the club has made a point of making golfers aware of potential dangers.

However, Chris White, General Manager, of Ken White Signs, doesn't believe legal action should be the catalyst for creating an awareness that there needs to be quality signage around the course.

"Nevertheless, with the current culture, I guess it does have an influence," he admitted.

He also felt that legal actions may have been prevented by the presence of clear signage, but obviously there won't be any evidence of such.

"Prevention is better than cure."

The problem with signage is that if a club gets it wrong, it's not exactly a mistake which can be hidden away. And golf clubs do make mistakes.

David Fairclough, of Signs & Designs Ltd, felt that too many clubs go for the cheaper option, which almost invariably turns out to be a false economy.

Rebecca is of the same opinion citing cheap materials which don't stand up to the elements. She could point to one golf club which has changed its tee signs three times in 12 years.

When posed the question about golf club errors, Chris felt the biggest mistake was too much one-off purchasing leading to a mish mash of style and colour.

"I can't emphasis enough the need to forward plan when purchasing signage. It doesn't affect current budgets to look ahead and a good reliable supplier will offer advice."

But signage has moved on in so many ways a golf club has many decisions to make.

Granite is becoming more popular, lasts indefinitely and is easy maintenance, while special requests can also be handled.

Eagle Promotions have recently supplied signage for Disneyland Paris who required a number of unusually shaped signs, portraying various images.

First impressions count and with an array of well thought out and attractive signs a golf club can display its attention to detail and provide golfers with the information and support they need when out on the course.

For further signage companies see page 48.

