

GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW

Golf is about Golfers

Greg Martin, *Martin Design Partnership, Ltd.*

I have been asked to provide a brief perspective on the 2008 Golf Industry Show. When I ponder the event, I can only reflect upon what was not there.

By its sheer size, this show is fascinating and remarkable. There were products that would reduce the amount of dew on turf, every conceivable type of construction or maintenance equipment, photographers and photographs, furniture and food, synthetic tees and synthetic golf (simulators), contractors, architects, and lots of chemicals. Mostly, there was a lot of anxiety.

What wasn't there was anything that would grow the game. Only one exhibit addressed the growth of the game: First Tee.

The game of golf has grown through demand, with little effort needed to establish or increase demand. Jack, Arnie, Tiger, Augusta, maintenance techniques, The PGA Tour, and ingenious architects have all contributed to golf's success and growth over the past two decades. Each of these industry sectors has improved the game. The industry may be growing, but the game is not expanding within our own borders. More and more we are reliant upon each other to buy, sell, and create the demand. The size of the GIS indicates a distorted reflection of all sectors of the industry. Just because the industry is big, doesn't mean it is healthy.

Without deep roots, golf cannot survive. This industry has been fed from an abundance of available resources without much competition. You know, as I do, that the health of an organism is based upon the health of the root structure. Right now, we have shallow roots, with more competition and fewer available nutrients. We need a more balanced diet.

Plain and simple:

- Without golfers there is no Golf Industry Show;
- Without golfers there is no golf industry;
- Without golfers, there is no golf.

What is really confounding is that we are all talking about it. Everyone at that event could discuss the problem, but only a select few are acting. We are distracted by conversations about length, challenge and yardage, beauty and ratings, green speed and turf color, swing speed and growing turf, but very little is devoted to growing golfers.

Let's stop talking about it. Let's improve the game by:

- **Funding** youth participation in a variety of methods;
- **Creating** opportunities for play; and
- **Promoting** the benefits of golf.



If we can grow deeper roots, then we will all benefit. If not, this game will become an industry.

My First Golf Industry Show



Brett Ziegler, *Assistant GCS, Knollwood Club*

The 2008 Golf Industry Show at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, was the first show that I have ever attended. Many questions ran through my mind in the days leading up to it: Just how big is this thing? How long will it take to walk through it all? Did I bring shoes with enough cushioning? After walking the trade show floor, I discovered the answers to all of these questions. Huge! A long time! And No! More importantly, I discovered this is a rewarding event that I hope to visit every year.

You need a plan going into the trade show, especially if it's your first time. I knew that in order to efficiently cover the trade show floor, I would need to skim by some booths and focus on the ones I thought were important. Being a rookie, I was fortunate enough to receive advice from some industry show veterans. They told me the best way to cover the show was to start at one end and walk row-by-row until reaching the other end. This seems obvious, but it's easy to start wandering around aimlessly in an event of this magnitude. These same vets also warned me that I would not be able to cover the entire show in one day. Yeah right, I thought, I am twenty-four years old and in good physical shape. I will be able to cover the whole thing in three-four hours tops. What a rookie mistake that was.

After receiving advice and evaluating areas that I wanted to learn more about, I had a plan set: Start at one end of the show and walk row-by-row until covering the entire floor. Stop at booths that were appealing and pass by ones that were not.

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