

Palmer targets corporate market

ORLANDO, Fla. — Recognizing the growing impact and opportunity of corporate golf, the Arnold Palmer Golf Academy has tailored its instruction experience for the business environment.

With PGA-certified professionals stationed at facilities across the country, Palmer is working with corporations such as Pennzoil, Paine Webber, Forbes Magazine, Dayton-Hudson-Marshall Fields, Office Depot, Cooper Tire and Hertz.

"The golf outing has become a modern staple of corporate culture," explained Brad Brewer, vice president/player development with Arnold Palmer Golf Academy, a division of Arnold Palmer Golf Management. "We've simply made it more practical for companies to take advantage of the resources we have here at Palmer.

"For example, we offer a learn-and-play program whereby a firm will come to The Bay Hill Club and stage a morning meeting. After breaking for lunch, the Academy will conduct a two-hour golf clinic for our corporate guests, followed by nine holes of golf at Bay Hill — with a Palmer instructor in each foursome.

"Many corporations will try to run this sort of business/golf meeting themselves, with mixed results. We've found that companies are eager to off-load the organizational responsibility to Palmer. This is our specific area of expertise; we'll do it right."

While the corporate outing business is hardly new, combining those outings with Academy-level instruction is. The Bay Hill Club is one of several clubs which routinely host Palmer Academy functions.

Another is the Palmer-managed Las Vegas International Golf Center, a 50-station Academy in the heart of downtown. Palmer also has licensed Academy relationships with the Saddlebrook Resort in Wesley Chapel, Fla., and The Bridges Golf Club in Bay St. Louis, Miss.

"One of the advantages of doing business with Palmer is the open door the Academy enjoys with the 32 courses operated by Arnold Palmer Golf Management — not to mention the 140 Palmer-designed courses around the world," Brewer explained.

Corporate programs are varied. One of the most popular is the 3- to 5-day Academy voucher, which corporations can offer to VIP vendors, or internally to their own executives.

"These firms entertain constantly," Brewer noted. "The vouchers allow them to say, 'Here: Have an Academy experi-

ence at Bay Hill, on us.' It's been a very big hit."

The voucher entitles each recipient to the complete Palmer Academy experience, which includes boutique lodgings at Bay Hill, personalized instruction and access to the course.

"Because we're flexible, several of our corporate clients have involved Palmer directly in their training programs," Brewer continued.

"For example, CNL [an Orlando-based funding institution] has made the Palmer Academy a division of their employee training program. We created a two-day 'Golf for Business' education program specifically tailored to CNL and its business. We also created a second dimension for CNL — a more comprehensive new player program which serves as an extension of its management orientation."

NGCOA marketing program hopes to increase golf rounds

CHARLESTON, S.C.—The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) has unveiled a comprehensive grassroots marketing program to increase the number of rounds played at member courses.

Market trends show that, while the number of golfers increased marginally over the past four years, the supply of golf courses continues to increase dramatically.

According to NGCOA, "Get Linked. Play Golf" is a marketing program that will provide NGCOA members with the tools necessary to grow their market share in the increasingly competitive business environment. By focusing on the message that golf builds relationships—family, social and business—the "Get Linked. Play Golf." program will help course owners overcome the hurdles that many beginning golfers face including expense, time constraints and intimidation.

"'Get Linked. Play Golf' will complement, not duplicate, the new player development initiatives of the USGA, World Golf Foundation and other golf associations," said Mike Hughes, NGCOA executive director. "Golf course owners are looking for creative ways to attract new players, grow participation in the game and increase the amount of play they see at their courses. We believe that this grassroots campaign is the way to accomplish that goal."

The message of the program is that golf is fun, entertaining, challenging and relaxing. Golf provides an opportunity to be outside, spend time with family and friends, and develop business connections. NGCOA members who participate in the program will receive a complete marketing kit that includes print advertisements, radio scripts, promotional ideas, public relations guidance, successful media buying strategies, and examples of direct mail pieces for order.

Hiring right

Continued from page 55

tween the mid-1940s and mid-1960s.

• College students, commonly referred to as Generation X-ers, have birth dates falling between the mid-1960s to mid-1980s.

College students. Hodge has had success with college students by offering free golf and as flexible work schedules as possible, Grover noted. In general, Generation Xers value fun, flexibility, recognition and praise, opportunities to learn new things, and small rewards.

"Small rewards can be providing someone with a pizza or a sleeve of golf balls," Grover said. "These things may not mean a lot to you. But when delivered in response to a job well done, they can mean a lot to this group. If you need someone to stay late to get the course ready for a tournament, a small, quick reward can be effective. Word gets out and people begin to like to work for you."

Retirees. Grenert has tapped deeply

into this group. In a tourist area like Rockland, which has become increasingly dependent on September and October revenues for a successful season, retirees have the advantage of not having to return to school come Labor Day. The quality of their work is also generally excellent.

"Traditionalists prize security in terms of job, income and employment, Grover said. "They have a strong work ethic, believing that one should work every day. Retirement can be a tad uncomfortable for this group. Having grown up in the Depression, they know that good times can be followed by bad, that you can never be too careful. So, it's not a bad idea to continue working, and it's actually kind of a habit... You hear a lot of people in this group say something like 'I just couldn't sit around and do nothing, I'd go nuts.' Free golf is also attractive to this group."

Baby Boomers. This group is quite different. Boomers view work not only as a duty, but also as a means to financial wealth. This is the only one of the three groups for

which money is the driving force. Raising their pay would seem to be the logical way to attract and keep members this group. But there is more to it. Boomers want to be paid on the basis of performance, not seniority, a major difference from traditionalists. Boomers also tend to trust and respond to authority, despite some of the bumper stickers to the contrary left over from the 1960s and 1970s.

One group that is surprisingly overlooked by superintendents is students majoring in golf course management. Only a handful of superintendents at the Maine conference indicated their courses were sites for students seeking internships in golf course management.

"This represents one hell of an opportunity," Grover said. "The fact they have selected a career in this area, are very interested in the field and are highly motivated makes them excellent workers. Free golf and the ability to learn more about their chosen profession are primary motivators. Finding students living quarters they can afford can be the major challenge."

When players hit your course, it's only natural that they expect the greens to be, well, green. If they're not, it could be time to treat with Sprint® 330, the iron chelate micronutrient from Becker-Underwood. Sprint's strong chelates protect iron availability in soils with pH levels up to 7.5 for beautiful, long-lasting green turf. It also brings out the color in flowers, ornamentals and shrubs. For easy measuring and mixing, Sprint is available in a highly soluble, concentrated powder that offers excellent tank mix flexibility with NPK and plant growth regulators.

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