

Get recognized for renovation excellence

When we spoke with some of our advisory board members earlier this year to discuss presenting a golf course with a renovation award, we knew we were onto something big.



Andrew Overbeck, editor

We knew renovation work was becoming more prevalent as many courses recognized they needed to reinvent themselves to keep up with the competition that sprouted up during the late '90s. Now we wanted to recognize their hard work. But how?

After months of sorting through the many variables and consulting industry insiders, we have come up with a framework for the *Golf Course News* Renovation of the Year Award.

While renovation work is extremely complicated and laborious, we have designed the Renovation of the Year Award to be exceedingly simple. Courses may nominate themselves by going to www.golfcoursenews.com and downloading the required entry forms and sending them into our offices. We will be soliciting entries

throughout the summer and early fall and a board of industry experts will make a decision on a winner before the end of the year. *Golf Course News* will present the award to the golf course and the superintendent at a gala event at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show in San Diego in February 2004.

Special recognition will also be given to the course architect, builder and participating vendors.

The forms cover two specific areas regarding renovation work. The first section relates to the basics of the renovation and provides a snapshot of the project, why was it undertaken, what was the scope and what was the cost and economic return.

While we recognize that courses are mainly embarking on renovation projects to realize economic gains and make their courses more attractive than the one down

the street, we also recognize that more courses are taking an environmentally sensitive approach (often by necessity) to renovation work. Therefore, the winner of the Renovation of the Year award will not only have to implement a successful renovation project from a design and business perspective, the winner will also have to demonstrate that the project has resulted environmental enhancement.

So think about the work your

course has done and visit www.golfcoursenews.com to check out the nomination forms and criteria. If you haven't done renovation work at your course, perhaps you know of a recently renovated course that deserves recognition. Let them know about the award or drop us a line and we'll contact them. We look forward to hearing from you and learning about the hundreds of innovative renovation projects from across the country.



POINT

COUNTERPOINT

Closing the back door

By JAMES KOPPENHAVER

We at Pellucid Corp. completed our 2002 Golf Participation Perspective and one of the surprising findings in our analysis of golf consumer survey information was the fact that golf lost almost a million players in 2002 vs. 2001. Even more concerning was the fact that this net loss of golfers was in a year where the industry attracted 2.1 million new golfers to the game but lost over three million golfers at the same time.



Jim Koppenhaver

We refer to this as golf participation's "back door" and it is our assertion that the shortest route to a healthier golf consumer base is by closing the back door vs. current continued industry efforts to welcome more golfers in the "front door." Before proposing some suggestions on how to fix this current challenge we need to first take a look at our interpretation of how we got here.

One of the tried and true maxims of marketing is that customer retention is infinitely easier than attracting new customers. Applying that to golf, it would seem natural that initial "grow the game" efforts should gravitate toward the easier solution of retention. The challenge is the industry's inverse relationship between where the money is vs. the parties responsible for front-line execution. The people in the best position to influence retention (existing operators primarily) have been financially challenged for the past several years. Conversely, the organizations with the money (primarily industry organizations) have little interest in or access to executing a retention strategy. Perhaps the underlying reason is that the industry organizations support programs primarily for public relations and there's not nearly the PR value in "keep a person in golf" vs. "convert a person to golf."

The "back door" theory is not a new revelation for the industry. Back in 2000, the inaugural gathering of industry leaders at Golf 20/20 set a

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Opening the front door

By M.G. ORENDER

Golf is a great game, and golf is a great industry. A rose-colored view, many readers might think, particularly golf course facility owners and managers who have seen a 3.1 percent national decline in rounds played from 2000 to 2002. A Pollyanna outlook, it might seem, to equipment manufacturers and the golf shops and stores that sell their products, who have been experiencing a dramatic fall in unit sales and total dollars spent.



M.G. Orender

Certainly, these are facts that cause all of us in the industry an immense amount of concern. There is no doubt that those of us with a vested interest in the game of golf cannot afford to let this serious situation go unchecked. However, this is exactly why golf is such a great game, and why golf is a great industry. We hear time and time again the untiring lauds of golf as a game of honor, integrity, fun, health, and a way in which family, friends

and business colleagues can come together. Equally as important, though, is the fact that golf also is a game that has a remarkably strong infrastructure – a blend of governing bodies and business entities that are willing to work together for the good of the industry. In short, if we have a problem, we have the combined will and resources to identify the source of the issue, and we have a unified passion, vision and ability to find and implement a solution.

Case in point has been the annual gathering of the industry's stakeholders and decision makers at the Golf 20/20 conference at the World Golf Village in St. Augustine, Fla. We all shared a grave concern for the future health of our game, we came together under the Golf 20/20 umbrella to discuss and identify

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Editor's note: Both participants in this month's Point/Counterpoint recognize the value of both attracting new players to golf while at the same time retaining players. Rather than debate which is more effective, we asked them to focus on one of the two.

Publisher
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Derek Rice

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Editorial Office

Golf Course News
106 Lafayette St., P.O. Box 997
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657
aoverbeck@golfcoursenews.com
drice@golfcoursenews.com

Advertising Offices

Golf Course News
106 Lafayette St., P.O. Box 997
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657

U.S. Sales:

Jim Povec
207-846-0600, ext. 272
jpovec@golfcoursenews.com

Marketplace and Classifieds

Anne Washburn
207-846-0600, ext. 230
awashburn@golfcoursenews.com

Subscription Information

Golf Course News, P.O. Box 3047
Langhorne, PA 19047
215-788-7112

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