

VC-60 VERTI-CUTTER

By First Products, Inc.

The VC-60 VERTI-CUTTER is designed for continuous heavy duty operation for fairways and tees, in all types of turf. This unit has a patented swing hitch that allows the operator to verti-cut around objects while turning without tearing the established turf. Cutting depth is 1 1/2 inches deep..



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NEWS ANALYSIS

Course marketing: Do something remarkable

To succeed, golf courses should set themselves apart from the competition, says marketing expert Terri Langhans.

To bring more business to a golf course, golf course owners and managers should remove their marketing hats and think more like a "normal" person.

Langhans, c.o.e. (chief of everything) of Blah Blah Blah Etc., shared this message at her presentation on Maverick Marketing at the National Golf Course Owners Association's annual conference Feb. 20-24 in Anaheim, Calif. At the conference, held in conjunction with the Golf Industry Show, Langhans told the crowd to think outside the box.

"We spend so much time trying to get away from ads," she says. "When you put on your marketing hat, you're joining the chorus. Don't do what everyone else does."

It takes a different type of thinking to get attention and draw in new and returning business, she adds. Start by connecting with the customers before convincing them to give the course their business. This is not done by spewing out as much information as possible about the facility.

"We love to inhale the aroma of the product and then we exhale ad nauseum to the target," she says.

First, think of one or two attributes or attraction factors. What is the need or want that is satisfied by those attraction factors? Keep in mind that green fees usually aren't a wise factor to market she says.

Instead, marketers should think about the strategy from their own perspectives and what they would want to hear. "This will keep you from being poisoned by the exhaust fumes," Langhans says.

A successful marketing campaign is one that illustrates how a golf course sets itself apart from others. Langhans suggests that golf course managers and owners make a list of its services and note how it is different from other area clubs' services. These include signage, voice mail, the people who answer the phone, letterhead, the Web site and parking.

Consider:

- What is the club doing that is the same, expected, ordinary or usual?

- Switch it up a bit – what can be done differently?

- How can each golfer's experience be made memorable? (An example Langhans has heard is playing music at the first tee box to ease golfers' nerves)

- What services would be offered if this wasn't a golf course? (Example: a hospital started offering valet service)

By doing something different, golf courses can do something remarkable—that is, something that is worthy or a remark, Langhans says. This is the best way to win customers, she adds, because the best marketing is word-of-mouth mention.

Langhans says this is the way to gain publicity rather than "doing" marketing, which is how many people often think of the process. "Branding isn't something you do," she says. "You become a brand; you achieve it."

People often make decisions based on emotion rather than fact, so Langhans suggests marketers play to this tendency. Show potential customers the course has a personality.

"Describe the business as if it were a walking, talking person," she says. Is it a man or a woman? What usually is a golfer's first impression of the course or facility? Is the course a wallflower or a mingler? "The best marketing in the world sounds like a letter from an old friend," she adds.

Langhans pushes the idea of a recommended daily activity—something managers or owners can do on a daily business to spread the word about the course. RDAs including attending networking meetings, calling wedding planners to get the word out about the facility and making one person's day a little better are activities that can add to the daily promotion of the course.

Ultimately, she says, every employee is a member of the course's marketing department. Each employee's action has the potential to leave an impact on the customer and could determine whether the customer returns.

"Think of yourself as being in the people business rather than the golf business," she says.

For more information, visit www.blahblahblah.us. – HW