

“If I start to ramble, you reel me in,” Serge Asensio requests. “OK?” Sure thing, Serge. Thirty minutes later, Asensio’s batteries are going strong with no sign of weakening. But I don’t try to reel him in because he’s not rambling.

Asensio is just so passionate about GolfTrak, his market-share tracking program for golf courses, that he’s fired up to talk about it. There’s a big difference between passion and the gift of blab.

Asensio has reason to be excited about his product. GolfTrak seems like an excellent marketing tool for golf courses that need to get a better grip on their operations. Asensio, the former competitive analysis department director for Marriott Hotels, says golf courses “have lagged woefully behind” other industries in their ability to measure market share.

Asensio says GolfTrak can provide answers to the following questions of golf course operators:

- Is my course overpriced or underpriced?
- Was last month’s special successful?
- Would a \$5 increase affect market share?
- What kind of revenue increase should I budget for next year?

What operator wouldn’t want this information? Well, Asensio says in a somewhat flabbergasted tone, many golf course operators aren’t interested in pricing concepts.

“They just kind of put their fingers in the air to figure out pricing,” he says. “They’re not sophisticated when it comes to pricing and market-share analysis.”

Golf course operators may utter a collective “ouch” after hearing Asensio’s critical statements. But is he correct?

Maybe Asensio is saying this to plug his sluggish business. But who can argue that courses *wouldn’t* benefit from the information he can offer? “There are 13,000 public courses, and nobody’s keeping track of who’s doing what,” Asensio insists.

A sticking point in GolfTrak’s information gathering process is that several courses in an area, not only one or two, must agree to undergo the market-share analysis.

“I need a minimum of four courses in a marketplace to get a report published,” Asensio says. “But it has been a challenge to get them.”

Are You Keeping Track of the Track?

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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All of the courses must provide Asensio data and pay him so he can compile a report for a marketplace. Asensio can’t be hired by one course to provide it with specific data from three of its competitors. He won’t work on the sly.

If five courses participate in a market-share analysis, Asensio provides each with specifics of their own operations — from comparisons of rounds and revenues on weekdays and weekends to green fees and golf car rentals. And to the individual courses, he will also provide aggregate numbers on their competition. Nobody gets the lowdown on anybody else. “I’m working as a neutral party for all of the courses,” Asensio says.

Still, individual courses get a good idea of where they stand with their competition. Then they can take the appropriate measures to improve their market share in the needed areas.

When Asensio debuted GolfTrak in the fall of last year, he charged \$160 a month. He soon realized the fee was too expensive, and he recently slashed the price to \$50 a month.

“It’s a no-brainer for that price,” Asensio says. “If you don’t want to know your market share for \$50, then you ought to be fired for violating your fiduciary duties as a golf course operator.”

Asensio says operators should be concerned with their capacity utilization or the maximum number of rounds a course can sell in a day. “In the hotel world, capacity utilization is equivalent to occupancy,” he adds.

Asensio insists that skeptics will realize the benefit of GolfTrak once they try it. But he says it will take about four years to become popular.

You can’t argue with Asensio regarding GolfTrak’s benefits — if it delivers what he promises. For \$50 a month, operators can learn a lot about themselves. It’s about dollars and sense.

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