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GOING TO A LOGO

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pionships and will be the site of the 2008 Ryder Cup, and says the members-only insignia caught on slowly there but eventually became a good seller at that ultra-private Louisville-area course.

The Cardinal Club, which opened in 2001, tracks shop sales by calculating retail revenue per round, a figure that excludes any guest or golf car fees. Hamburger reports a healthy \$10 to \$12 per round in retail sales. It has a loyal customer base: The Cardinal Club hosts home matches for the University of Louisville men's and women's teams and

tapped alumni and school boosters for membership. It also accommodates an estimated 3,000 guest golfers per year, many of them University of Louisville fans, either playing with members or attending events. To sell to this loyal audience, the golf shop was purposely sited just inside the front door to the clubhouse, making it a first stop for most who enter.

Hamburger makes his merchandise visible with a variety of techniques. He and his staff assemble frequent themed displays, picking up on such things as springtime's Kentucky Derby, mid-summer's

Fourth of July or the fall football season. The head pro also rotates apparel on and off discount tables. One table on wheels, offering 20 percent to 40 percent off, is posted just outside of the shop or moved to other high-visibility areas such as the patio between the bar and the putting green.

"There's a secret: If you want to get rid of it and put it on sale, if you physically move it out of the shop, it'll sell better than if it's within the shop," Sobecki says. "Whether it's on a rolling cart with hangers that's outside or on a sales table in the hallway, people's perception

is, 'This must be on sale.' You can put it on a rack in the middle of the shop with a sticker that says 20 percent off and it doesn't get the same kind of response."

Mike Hill, director of golf services at Angels Crossing Golf Club near Kalamazoo, Mich., drives sales by handwriting special tags for a select few items in stock. The director of golf services at this public course personally inscribes, "Thanks for shopping Angels Crossing," and then marks the price way down. Those few bargain items — say a \$40 shirt going for \$12.95 — are

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Congratulations Iowa State!

Nick E. Christians, Ph.D.
Horticulture Professor
Iowa State University

Trion Lifts, Inc., the leading manufacturer of turf maintenance equipment, appreciates the efforts of Mark Howieson and Iowa State University in conducting two important studies regarding mower adjustments and reel sharpening. They show your school's dedication to advancing research and education.

In lieu of our company's attendance at various annual golf industry trade shows in 2006, Trion believes its resources are much better spent in supporting schools that are making a difference in our industry. To that end, we are pleased to announce Iowa State University as the latest recipient of a Trion Pro-M workstation.

Thanks again for your research that will promote further improvements in equipment and maintenance technology.

John M Beattie, President
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Golfdom

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*Source: WebTrends, January 2005

GOING TO A LOGO

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placed back in the midst of the rest of the non-sale merchandise. "It's there to physically reward someone who's actually going through the merchandise," Hill says. "Now I'm starting to get golfers coming in looking for those items."

Hill doesn't promote these deals, but word is getting around and more customers are digging through shirts, sweaters and other goods to find them. "That's what I want to happen," he says, knowing that the bargain hunters will find other must-have items while they hunt for the price breaks.

Hill brought 25 years of sales and marketing experience outside of the golf industry with him when he signed on with Angels Crossing, which opened in May 2004, and placed an emphasis on service. "We try to greet everyone immediately in the golf shop and get to know as many by name as possible," Hill says. "We offer our assistance but don't badger. There's a fine line between being helpful and being oppressive, and we try not to cross that line."

Every piece of clothing is logoed, with the exception of some rainwear. Balls with the Angels Crossing insignia



THE CARDINAL CLUB tracks shop sales by calculating retail revenue per round minus guest or golf car fees.

are also popular because the course — 18 singular holes on 350 acres — is a destination for many golfers. Despite being constricted by temporary quarters of 1,500 square feet in what will become a condo unit once a clubhouse is constructed, Hill describes his shop business as "just starting to grow." He doesn't analyze sales per round but says 70 percent of revenue is from soft goods and 30 percent from hard goods such as clubs, shoes, balls and bags.

The goal at The Wilds Golf Club in Prior Lake, Minn., is to exceed \$500,000 each year in golf shop retail sales. Shad Gordon, who has been with the top-ranked public course since it opened in 1995, worked his way up from scrubbing golf cars to head pro before becoming general manager two years ago. He says he stopped analyzing sales on a per-round basis and now looks at them month by month. Most slow days are related to holidays and lousy weather, he says. He responds by gearing holiday sales to the likes of Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Labor Day. As an example, The Wilds discounted anything red, white

or blue by 20 percent to 40 percent during the July 4 holiday.

The weather near Minnesota's Twin Cities can be brutally cold even in spring and fall, so The Wilds introduced a "Play the Temperature" promotion, which Gordon describes as his biggest hit. Golfers are charged the degree-Fahrenheit reading that is registered a half-hour before their tee times. On a 28-degree day, for example, players pay \$28 for greens fees and a car. "When other courses are not doing anything, we're full," Gordon says, noting that many golfers take pride in seeing how low they can go — temperature-wise, that is.

The promotion has worked so well that The Wilds, according to Gordon, has trademarked "Pay the Temperature" and "Play the Temperature" to keep them as signature offers. Another club in the Twin Cities area has countered with "Play the Dew Point."

Golf shop sales increase on those cold days as well, so it's a win-win for the club. Gordon also uses price reductions to jump-start purchases on bad weather days.

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GOING TO A LOGO

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"When it's rainy out, put your raingear on sale," he advises. "You're going to sell more if they need it that same day and if you put a little incentive in there to buy it."

The Wilds shop will occasionally offer packages that bundle a free shirt and hat with greens fees. The clothing items are add-ons to encourage rounds during slow times, like Mother's Day or some other holidays. "Other courses are

discounting (greens fees)," Gordon says. "We want our full amount and then we'll throw in value-added products."

The typical Wilds golf shop staffer (excluding the assistant golf professionals) is promoted from some entry-level jobs. "You need to get people who are knowledgeable but also who are personable," Gordon says. They receive salaries of \$9 to \$10 per hour and share in some of the tips. Currently, there are no commissions for sales, but Gordon is considering that for next year.

The process of developing a logo can be serendipitous. At Angels Crossing, the new course's management team was struggling, even with the help of a marketing agency, to find an appropriate image that wouldn't come off as too religious or too Gothic-influenced. Only after one of the agency's employees nearly rear-ended a Pontiac on the roadways — and noticed how the triangular-shaped outside of the Pontiac logo resembled folded wings behind an upright angel — did a properly graceful logo present itself. The result has been a very popular insignia.

At Bethpage, Rehor and Dick Smith were searching for a logo concept and found it one day while looking out the window of the clubhouse. Smith noticed an image of a "caddie boy" carved into the shutter boards, which had been on the building since it was home to the private Lenox Hills Country Club and, even before that, a private residence.

However you arrive at a logo, there's no denying its importance in driving name recognition and sales.

"Before they make a decision on what they think your quality is, they look at the logo," Sobecki says of prospective members, golfers and retail customers. "It has to be consistent with the level that you're trying to attain." ■

Bruce Allar is a frequent contributor to Golfdom.

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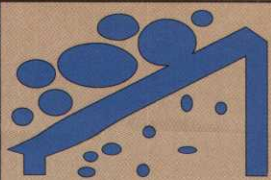
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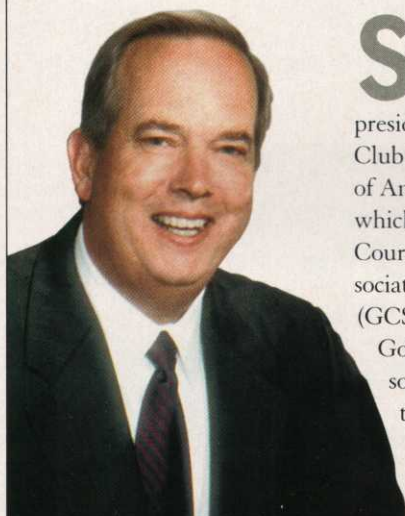
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PROFILE

James Singerling

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Since 1990, James Singerling has been the executive vice president and CEO of the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA), which will join the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) at the 2007 Golf Industry Show. Prior to his CMAA appointment,

he was a corporate official in the Robert Trent Jones Sr. golf course design and management companies and served as vice president and general manager of Coral Ridge Country Club in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Singerling has been a CMAA member for more than 21 years and has enjoyed an outstanding 41-year career in the hospitality industry. He is a certified executive chef with the

American Culinary Federation and a Certified Club Manager with CMAA. He is also president of The Club Foundation (the private club industry's charitable arm), served as president of the Team USA Culinary Foundation from 1992 to 1996 and has been honored as an industry leader of the year by the University of Nevada Las Vegas, Michigan State University and Florida State University.

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Golfdom: *What is the most important issue facing golf course owners and managers today and why is it important?*

Singerling: The most important issue facing owners and managers is the need to structure your business plan to be flexible enough to accommodate the rapid changes to our industry.

Golfdom: *What is the key to a good manager/superintendent relationship and why is that relationship important?*

Singerling: Having worked with Robert Trent Jones Sr. for nine years during the height of his marvelous career, I have always

known of the need for respect and support for the golf course superintendent. The amazing evolution of the profession was generally passed over by the golfing public. However, Mr. Jones loved meeting with the turfgrass and agronomy students from the great programs at Michigan State and Penn State and learning what these young professionals were bringing to the industry. As a manager, I knew I needed a peripheral knowledge of the superintendents' world so that I could work to provide the resources needed to generate the conditions on

"I knew I needed a peripheral knowledge of the superintendent's world."

the playing field of golf. Those resources not only included the budget dollars but also the human resources and equipment. Most of all, it is management's responsibility to assure that the superintendent can have a productive family life, while providing his professional expertise to the golf facility.

Golfdom: *Finish this sentence: "The best thing that could happen to the golf industry would be ..."*

Singerling: ... to eliminate the dragging of the skeletons out of the past and focus on the unbelievably bright future of our industry. Our future is with the legions of bright young professionals who are learning and interning at thousands of facilities around the world.

Golfdom: *What is the best investment you ever made in your business or career?*

Singerling: I committed at the beginning of my career
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PROFILE/JAMES SINGERLING

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to always learn something from every person I would meet or work with, no matter what the position. In my 40-plus years in business I can look back and remember something that has been given to me from every life that I have touched. I owe every success I enjoy to those who have surrounded me.

Golfdom: *Who are the three most influential people in the golf industry and why?*

Singerling: Robert Trent Jones Sr. and his wonderful wife, Ione, would have had the greatest influence on me because they allowed

me to share nine years of his life and to learn their true passion for the game of golf. Valderrama Golf Club's Jaime "Jimmy" Ortiz Patino, who I am privileged to know as a friend for over 20 years. Jimmy should have his picture in the dictionary next to the word "Perfection." He has never settled for anything less. His impact on bringing the world of golf together will be legend. And Tim Finchem, who has continued to think "out of the box" and to focus on delivering a future for the game of golf. The leadership initiatives of the PGA

Tour in taking Dean Beman's dream of the World Golf Hall of Fame to reality, then empowering the Golf 20/20 initiative to bring every entity and component that wants to be involved in the future of golf and orchestrating a collaborative atmosphere to plan for that future is a remarkable accomplishment.

Golfdom: *Who is your favorite golfer?*

Singerling: It would have to be my wife, Molly. Our time together playing or watching the game being played are the happiest moments of my life.

Golfdom: *If you could have lunch with anyone, who would it be and what would be the first question you would ask?*

Singerling: It would be with Barbara Bush and I would ask her why she makes her husband putt those "tap-ins" at this stage in his career.

Golfdom: *What is your favorite movie?*

Singerling: It would be Mel Gibson's "The Passion."

Golfdom: *What club in your bag do you hit the best?*

Singerling: My Nike Ignite Driver. ■

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