

Targeting specific groups

An audit of your club's membership database and a comparison with benchmarked clubs may indicate that your club is short of members in a particular category. The club may be short of women and have plenty of space in the midweek, or the club may be short of juniors creating concern for the future of membership.

Targeting specific groups essentially means target marketing.

What's likely to attract the target market you're after and how are you best to promote to them?

What can you offer? Consider elements such as; membership rates, access rights, social engagement and opportunities to develop skills of the game. Consider what other golf clubs and other sports are doing.

Speak to existing members, particularly new members, and find out what they would like from your club that may be able to be included in a membership offering that is not currently there.

Once you have a membership package that's aimed at a target market, it's time to get the message out there.

Communicating with different groups

Consider the following communication initiatives:

- Try different communication channels including social media;
- Display information where target groups congregate;
- Focus on different elements of golf such as the social side and the health benefits;
- Reach out to different communities such as schools and sports clubs by holding taster sessions;
- Write in the local paper about what's happening at the club and opportunities for trial membership.

Women and Girls Golf

When it comes to membership and learning the skills, rules and etiquette of the game, it is important to recognise the level of support needed to make women and feel comfortable in their new golf environment.

Golf clinics share the learning experience amongst other learners and are an excellent way to make women and girls enjoy their time. The social side to the game is often far more important early than the competitive side and in many cases will remain so.

Ideas to make the golf club attractive to women and girls:

- Encourage mother/daughter and family sessions. Initially, women and girls are more likely to attend group activities together.

- Make sure your golf club has clean and tidy facilities for females, particularly change rooms!
- Encourage existing female members to volunteer to run and support your activities. Having a mentor or point of contact is beneficial in helping new golfers feel at ease.
- Incorporate golf sessions with an opportunity to socialise during and afterwards.
- Promote activities to women's groups and communicate through organisations where women are likely to frequent.
- Consider the times when you run activities - do these fit in with women's lifestyles?
- Speak to local schools and offer an opportunity for a group of girls to learn the game or to structure some supervised free access as part of after school sports.

Golf clubs should look at different ways to recruit and retain individuals from a variety of backgrounds and sometimes it only takes minor amendments to activities to make them more attractive to different groups.

Communication, member support and mentoring are key to making new and prospective members comfortable. Providing opportunities for a diversity of members of the community is not only beneficial to individuals but improves the future health prospects of the golf club.

Remember, your State / Territory Golf Association representative is a valuable resource in supporting your club's targeted membership growth initiatives.