

Strategies for Success

When recruiting and teaching women golfers, pay attention to the details

By Sandy Lemon, PGA/LPGA

I have been teaching women the game of golf for more than 30 years with success. This is based, in part, on communicating the “Why Play Golf” factor, which includes: social involvement; competition; business opportunities; time with spouse /family/ friends on weekends or after work; exercise and/or recreational therapy; outdoor aesthetics; and, finally, love of the game.



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I like to emphasize that golf is one of the few sports in which a person can compete and socialize at the same time.

Through teaching experiences, I have developed the following four strategies for success:

1. Recruiting or Marketing Yourself and Your Facility

This includes contacting local golf associations/professional business groups to inquire about being a guest speaker where you can discuss your “Why Play Golf” teaching and coaching philosophies and instructional programs. I’ve found that women prefer group clinics over private lessons, so be sure to offer these along with playing experiences. The faster you get players on the course, the quicker they will enjoy the game.

2. Approach or Introduction to Each Student

I always stand by the statement: “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” My keys to success here are: a) Be on time; b) Provide bag

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pick up to the practice range; c) Shake hands with good eye contact; d) Provide a comfortable and relaxed setting for pre-lesson communication. I also make sure my station set-up is prepared in advance, and it’s good to know ahead of time what part of the game the student desires to work on. I cover what club does what, and have teaching aids, props and balls set up in advance or readily available. Additionally, I let the student know that I will provide post-lesson notes.

3. Lesson Experience

My teaching philosophy is, “there is not a swing or a way you have to hold the club. We just want to make your swing better for you.” My goal is to see results. If I can adjust something in the pre-swing and get the ball to do what we want – ideal. This can help take away too many swing thoughts. I also emphasize that golf is a game of misses; it is about how good your misses are. We rate each shot on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being perfect (Ben Hogan said he only hit one 10 on average in a round of golf). I also emphasize that the game is not about strength – it’s about posture, balance and flexibility. And the only position in your swing we are going to work on is the “moment of truth” or impact.

4. Maintain and Retain Through a “Wow” Factor

To strengthen my bond with students and keep them hooked on the game, I try to earn their trust by showing that I care about them and their golf shot progress. I do this by making sure to personally congratulate any accomplishments, and keeping the experiences positive, social and fun. Also, I encourage feedback and welcome email questions. I’ve also created a student directory and use constant contact to send monthly instructional programs and news.

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One thing I can’t emphasize enough is the importance of training your staff on the value of interacting with the female customer. Women are browsers; they like to explore the shop to see what exactly you offer and if it they can find a great deal. That’s why the presentation of products in your shop is so important. But that’s not the extent of it. You can’t expect an organized shop alone to increase your business. Your staff has to be welcoming and service oriented, they have to exercise phone etiquette, and do the small things, like always ask “How I can be of service to you?” or “How was your round today?”

Remember that men and women socialize differently. Men talk about events, sports, etc. Women talk about people, especially their children, family and friends. Understand the difference and adjust accordingly. Above all, be a good listener. The personal bonds you create will likely be as or more important than the swing expertise you impart when it comes to getting women hooked on the game. ■

Sandy Lemon is the PGA director of instruction at Twin Warriors Golf Club in Santa Ana Pueblo, N.M.