

WORKING FOR THE GOLF COURSE

*An interactive debate on sustainable management at The Home of Golf
for representatives of European Governing Bodies*

Wednesday 28th and Thursday 29th March 2012

WORK BOOK

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1st session: The golfing experience and its different parts

There have been five detailed golf consumer surveys* in Europe during 2010/2011. There is much common ground in their analysis of golfer needs and demands.

When choosing where to play, the main two issues which affect players' choice are:

- a) condition of greens, fairways and tees
- b) price of green fees or annual subscriptions.

But golf attracts a very wide range of ages and abilities. Within this range, demands and priorities vary considerably.

Understanding how to get the optimal balance between these demands, for the largest number of customers, taking account of club finances and regulatory pressures, is at the heart of this conference.

In the surveys, which contain views from low and higher handicap players, these factors turn up most often as being key to "the golfing experience":

- 1) Smoothness/trueness of greens
- 2) Speed of greens
- 3) Firmness of greens
- 4) Softness of greens
- 5) Dry fairways – cut high
- 6) Dry fairways – cut low
- 7) Roughs - cut high
- 8) Roughs - cut low
- 9) Speed of play
- 10) No rush
- 11) Nature experience
- 12) Weather
- 13) Good company
- 14) Quality of the restaurant and bar facilities
- 15) Cost of round

**Sources: KPMG, Myerscough College, Sports Marketing Services, STERF, Syngenta*

Questions:

1. How many of these factors, listed below, are related to the golf course?
2. Which of these factors do you regard as the most important (1=most important, 15=least important)
3. Which of these factors cause the greatest conflict of interest between low and higher handicap players? (1=most conflict, 15=least conflict)

Experience factor	Related to the golf course	Importance rating	Conflict rating
1. Smoothness/trueness of greens	☐	☐	☐
2. Speed of greens	☐	☐	☐
3. Firmness of greens	☐	☐	☐
4. Softness of greens	☐	☐	☐
5. Dry fairways – cut high	☐	☐	☐
6. Dry fairways – cut low	☐	☐	☐
7. Roughs - cut high	☐	☐	☐
8. Roughs - cut low	☐	☐	☐
9. Speed of play	☐	☐	☐
10. No rush	☐	☐	☐
11. Nature experience	☐	☐	☐
12. Weather	☐	☐	☐
13. Good company	☐	☐	☐
14. Quality of the restaurant and bar facilities	☐	☐	☐
15. Cost of round	☐	☐	☐

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2nd session: Which golf course at the heart of which golfing experience?

Questions:

1. Low handicap players want true greens, fast pace, firm greens, low-cut fairways, penal roughs but which do they regard as the most important? (1=most important, 5=least important)

Experience factor	Importance rating
True greens	
Fast pace	
Firm greens	
Low-cut fairways	
Penal roughs	

2. Higher handicap players want true greens, medium pace, receptive greens, lush fairways, low-mown roughs but which do they regard as the most important? (1=most important, 5=least important)

Experience factor	Importance rating
True greens	
Medium pace	
Receptive greens	
Lush fairways	
Low-mown roughs	

3. How can we satisfy these various demands at the same time?

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3rd session: Maximising revenue generation from a well-managed golfing experience

Questions:

1. Keeping existing business. How can your existing golfers judge whether they are getting value for money? What performance indicators can they use?
2. Maximising capacity. What factors increase or reduce capacity?
3. Attracting new business. Which indicators can be used when marketing for new business?

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4th session: Cost control on the golf course

A. Manpower usage:

Questions:

1. How should clubs analyse time usage on the different areas of the course i.e. greens, aprons, bunkers, fairways, tees and roughs?
2. Which are the priority areas and are these agreed within a club? (1=highest priority, 6=lowest priority)

Area	Priority rating
Greens	
Aprons	
Bunkers	
Fairways	
Tees	
Roughs	

3. Which of these areas costs the most to maintain, inclusive of manpower, materials and machinery costs?

B. Materials/inputs usage:

Questions:

1. How do clubs assess which grass species will survive in their particular climate?
2. Different grasses have different water/pesticide/fertiliser/mowing needs. How do clubs assess the ongoing costs of the species choice(s) they have made?
3. Which other materials require substantial budget funds?

C. Machinery usage:

Questions:

1. Which areas of the course use the most machinery and fuel?
2. Where can such use be reduced and what are the consequences for the golfing experience?

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5th session: Environmental stewardship and social responsibility

A. Use of sensitive inputs (water, pesticides, fertilisers):

Questions:

1. In which areas are there threats from legislation in your country?
2. How are these threats impacting on the quality of the golfing experience?
3. How can clubs reduce these impacts without damaging the course?

B. Biodiversity:

Questions:

1. How do clubs decide their habitat goals and management plans?
2. Which species lists are compiled and monitored?
3. What sources of help are available and what do they cost?

C. Land use:

Questions:

1. What other land uses can be found on courses in your country?

2. How much of an issue will this be in future?

D. Energy use and waste management:

Questions:

1. How do clubs ensure that they are efficient and effective in this area?

2. What benefits should they be hoping to get?

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6th session: Hot topics identified through the day

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Thursday 29th March 2012

1st session: To discuss tools/services/pathways which national governing bodies can promote for use by their clubs

Questions:

1. Which tools are needed for which performance indicators?

2. Which services are, or need to be, available for clubs?

3. Which pathways are needed to deliver advice to clubs?

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2nd session: A presentation by Steve Isaac and Phil Russell on collecting and using evidence

3rd session: To discuss environmental certification

Questions:

1. What benefits are required from certification?
2. How is credibility assured?
3. How are costs assessed?
4. Which individual schemes are currently used?
5. What essentials are necessary if an international scheme is to work?

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4th session: A general discussion of pan-European issues such as EU legislation, greenkeeper training and the EGA Golf Course Committee

Final session: To discuss ongoing communication between The R&A and National golf authorities.

Overall summary, agreed actions and timelines.

Close

Based in St Andrews, The R&A organises The Open Championship, major amateur events and international matches. Together with the United States Golf Association, The R&A governs the game worldwide, jointly administering the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status, Equipment Standards and World Amateur Golf Rankings. The R&A's working jurisdiction is global, excluding the United States and Mexico.

The R&A is committed to working for golf and supports the growth of the game internationally and the development and management of sustainable golf facilities. The R&A operates with the consent of 143 organisations from the amateur and professional game and on behalf of over thirty million golfers in 128 countries.

