



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

During times of uncertainty, it is vital that golf courses provide clear and concise messaging about your daily operations and safety protocols. Building trust with your customers has never been more important.

1. CREATE YOUR INFORMATION HUB

WHY?

Customers are always seeking trusted sources of information that they can turn to on a regular basis. Having a regularly updated page on your website that is dedicated to your COVID-19 response gives you a place to send customers for information.

WHAT?

The hub should contain:

- Information about changes to your hours and operations
- A list of specific safety protocols that your golf course is implementing
- An overview of available facilities and services
- Contact information
- Answers to frequently asked questions

HOW?

This hub needs to be clear, concise and, most importantly, current. Consider adding videos and images to help convey your most important messages. Be sure that the page is mobile-friendly and that it is easily found in your website's navigation. Give the page a simple URL like www.yourgolfcourse.com/covid19.

It is important that this page is regularly updated with the latest information. Customers want to ensure your course is a safe place to play - they will continue to look at your site to ensure you are adapting your protocols/policies during COVID-19. Recheck this page daily against the latest government policy to ensure it is always up to date.

A simple table like the example below might be a good way to communicate key dates and protocols.

SERVICES	LIMITED SERVICE	INTERMEDIATE SERVICE	FULL SERVICE
BAG DROP			
Golf Carts	•	•	•
Pull Carts	•	•	•
Bag Storage		•	•
Bag Service			•
Club Cleaning			•

Once this hub has been established, it can be used as a place to direct customers via social media, email, phone and advertising. When confirming tee times with customers, take the opportunity to advise them of your updated safety protocols. Explain that if they have recently travelled, or are showing any cold or flu-like symptoms, they should not visit the golf course. Also explain the procedure on their arrival, the limited facilities, and direct them to the information hub page on your website for complete details.

It is important that the key messages found on the information hub be relayed to all golf course staff. Have each staff member review this page as part of their employee training program and hold regular team meetings to update staff on changes to procedures. Keep in mind that all of these protocols are new for your staff as well. When in doubt, staff should always choose to err on the side of caution and consider the wellbeing of themselves and golfers above all else.

2. LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMER

WHY?

Learning more about your customers has always been important, but it is even more important now. Regardless of whether you deal with members of the public, everyone has questions and concerns. Understanding how you can better communicate and serve your customers is key.

WHAT?

Asking questions is one of the most effective ways of learning more about the people you serve. Data collected through frontline staff and surveys can help to improve the customer service experience. Showing customers that you are listening and willing to make changes based on their feedback helps build trust.

HOW?

Collecting feedback can be done in several different ways:

- **Maintain regular communication with all frontline staff. Encourage them to ask questions of your customers and to watch for pain points in your service delivery.**
- **Create a survey that can be sent to customers once their golf experience is done. If your course already uses a survey system to gather data, be sure to include specific COVID-19 questions to learn more about the effectiveness of your safety protocols and modified operations.**
- **Monitor your social media channels for frequently asked questions. Take the time to respond to questions and direct people to the hub page on your website.**

3. STREAMLINE MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

WHY?

Relevant and timely information is one of the most important tools at your disposal. The delivery of this information is equally as important. Creating and maintaining clear lines of communication will allow your customers to get the information they need while keeping things manageable for your team.

WHAT?

Now is a great time to review all your marketing and communications channels. Moving forward, these channels will be a vital link between your golf course and your customers. If people have a hard time finding the information they need, they may choose to go elsewhere. By conducting a quick audit of your channels, you can focus on the ones that are working while removing those that are no longer in use.

HOW?

Performing a quick audit of your channels is a good way to reorganize and realign your efforts. During this process, be sure to:

- **Update your website by updating information and removing content that is no longer relevant.**
- **Delete any social media channels that are not regularly updated.**
- **Check all your social profiles regularly and answer questions promptly - your customers may contact you with questions through social media rather than picking up the phone. After providing the answer, always remember to direct them to your hub page for the latest updates.**
- **Google the name of your golf course and look for websites that mention you. Look for opportunities to reach out to these other websites and request that any outdated information is refreshed.**
- **Ensure that your Google My Business listing is up to date.**
- **Review any data from your e-newsletter lists and remove email addresses that are not valid. Update member contact information if needed.**

When dealing with a rapidly evolving situation like COVID-19, it will be vital to keep your lines of communication up to date and flexible. Should a health situation arise at your golf course, update your marketing and communications channels with the most current information that you have. Be transparent, honest and open. In preparation for an unexpected health emergency, consider crafting posts ahead of time that can be released as soon as a situation arises. Direct all communication enquiries to a single individual within the organization.

4. FIND NEW WAYS TO COMMUNICATE KEY MESSAGES

WHY?

Over the past few months, people have become inundated with news and information. As businesses like golf courses continue to reopen, it will be vital that customers know precisely what protocols and processes these facilities are employing to help keep them safe.

WHAT?

Finding new ways to communicate key messages will help ensure that your customers retain information. While written content is still important, adding visuals will create a greater impact. Photos, videos and graphics can be added to your website, social media, e-newsletters and other marketing materials.

HOW?

Consider using a process like the one listed below to identify and communicate key messages:

- Walk through the entire golfing process through the eyes of a customer; from the booking of a tee time through the completion of a round and leaving the golf course.
- Identify all of the questions or issues that a person might have during the process and create a list of content ideas to address these concerns.
- Create a photo or video walkthrough of the golfing experience that highlights safety protocols and changes in common processes.
- Frequently share these visuals across your marketing and communications channels.
- Update this content as protocols change.

When posting on social media, be sure to consider:

- Focus on quality over quantity when it comes to social media posts. Post when you have something to talk about and refrain from “posting for the sake of posting”. Post content that you feel will be helpful and informative for your audience. Keep the tone professional but light-hearted and positive.
- While sharing COVID-19 information is important, not all social media posts need to focus on the subject. As a change of pace, consider sharing feel-good stories, behind the scenes content and staff profiles to create a more well-rounded content calendar.
- This may also be an opportunity to highlight the benefits of golf from a health perspective. Posts on how a physical activity like golf helps to improve mood, heart health and mental health should be added to your content calendar. A collection of health-related benefits can be found at golfandhealth.org.
- If you are crafting posts intended for junior golfers, highlighting the benefits of golf from a life skills perspective might be an interesting angle to pursue.

While producing high-quality visuals is always a good idea, golf courses should not let a lack of technology or skills prevent them from creating this content. The information presented in this content is more important than the quality of the production.

Any modern smartphone is capable of capturing high-quality photos and videos. There are many free, easy to use apps and online programs available which can help you edit your content:

- Canva (online graphic creator)
- Quik (free video editing app)
- Adobe Lightroom Photo Editor (free photo editor app)