HOW TO GET STARTED

Golf Digest

THINK YOUNG / PLAY HARD

ARNIE & KATE UPTON

THE NEW BIG THING ON TOUR

GOLFERS WHO GIVE BACK

HIT MORE GREENS FROM 150 YARDS

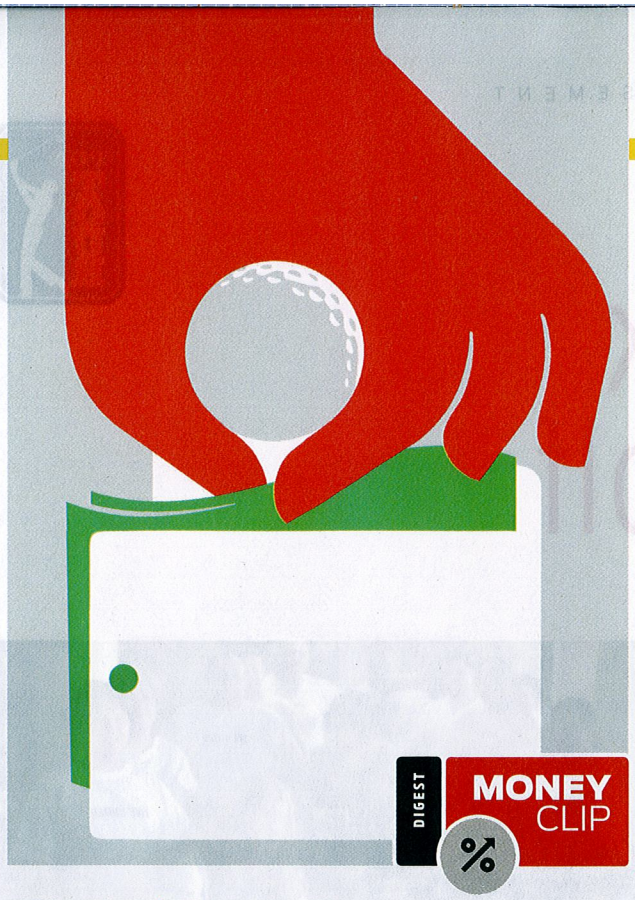
LATINOS: GOLF'S EMERGING FORCE

$4.99US/FOR

12>

0 75330 08346 7

DEC/13



DIGEST MONEY CLIP

PETER FINCH / GOLF & FINANCE

FUNDRAISING 101

HOW TO HELP YOUR FAVORITE CHARITY GOLF EVENT PRODUCE MORE PROFIT

IS RUNNING A charity golf tournament strictly for the birds? I wouldn't fault you for answering "yes." Americans put on hundreds of thousands of such events every year, and consultants will tell you most of them produce net profits of less than $5,000.

"A lot of times the numbers you see reported in the papers are gross proceeds," says Don Carmichael, president of Champion Events Group in Alabama. "In truth, the average net is more like $3,800."

That's not to say big returns are impossible. Plenty of events generate contributions in the six figures and up. Here, from conversations with multiple tournament organizers, are half a dozen tips for squeezing more profit from a golf fundraiser.

➡ **Ask yourself, *What's the goal of this event?*** Most of the time it's fundraising, but often there's more. You might be seeking publicity for your group. Perhaps you're entertaining clients, and you're throwing in a fundraising element to make everyone feel good about it. Some groups organize tournaments mainly as a treat for their volunteers. Knowing the "why" of your event will help you decide who belongs on your organizing committee. You want committee members who can help you meet all your goals, not just one.

➡ **Speaking of the committee:** It's critical to recruit people with ties to the business community, because sponsorships are where the real money resides. You won't make much, if anything, off golfers' entry fees.

➡ **Whether your sponsors are multinational conglomerates or local mom-and-pops, they want one thing:** a return on their investment. "You can't just ask for a donation and call it a sponsorship," says Phil Immordino, president of the Golf Tournament Association of America, an umbrella group for event organizers. "You have to make it worth their while." It starts with putting the biggest sponsor's name on your event, but don't stop there. Put the name all over your website, the invitations and signs at the event. Mention it prominently in media interviews. Build the sponsor an area for entertaining clients and hand out items with its logo. "Then, it's not a one-day event," Immordino says.

➡ **Give yourself some time.** If you had a full-time staff, you could probably pull together a golf tournament in a couple of months. But usually you have a volunteer committee instead. Afford yourself a minimum of six months to pull everything together, Immordino says. If possible, pick the date a year in advance.

➡ **Create a complete line-item budget before you decide what to charge sponsors and golfers.** "People will say, 'The most anyone will pay for a foursome is $800,' " says Joe Gill, a Florida tournament consultant. "No! Your event might cost you $820 a foursome."

➡ **Don't assume the traditional scramble format—or the traditional anything—is the way to go.** Don Carmichael's group pitches "Golf & Walk" events instead of tournaments. Like walkathons, these events depend on participants reaching out to their friends and neighbors for contributions. "We're looking for 40 [participants] who have a real heart for the organization, and if we can get them and their friends to contribute $1,700, which is about our average, that's a net profit of just more than $1,600 per person," Carmichael says.

Other golf events are finding creative ways to pull more money from participants. Joe Gill encourages his clients to sell a "super ticket," which includes the long-drive competition, closest to the pin, mulligans and a scratch-off raffle card with a sponsor's name on the back. The goal is to get golfers to reach into their wallet only once during the day—and at a higher level than they otherwise might.

For the same reason, some planners consider auctions passé. Mellisa Nielsen, who runs a California firm called the Charity Angels, prefers the "opportunity drawing board." Similar to a football pool, it has everybody kick in $50 for a square on the board (or $100 for three squares). At the tournament's end, there's a drawing, and 10 to 15 people go home with donated prizes. Not only is it simpler to administer than an auction ever could be, it ensures—in Nielsen's words—"we're going to get your money."

Which is the whole point, right? ♣

For more on golf and money, follow **Peter Finch** on Twitter: twitter.com/Pete_Finch.

SHOULD YOU HIRE A CONSULTANT?

A qualified events consultant will surely make running your fundraiser easier—and probably more profitable, too. Typically they put in 10 to 20 hours of advance work per event, charging $2,500 to $5,000. Some firms take a portion (15 percent, for example) of your event's gross proceeds instead. Consultants who belong to the Golf Tournament Association of America make a guarantee: They'll refund their fee if you net less than you did without their help.

ILLUSTRATION BY / ANGUS GREIG