GOLF INDUSTRY GURU

ARTICLE

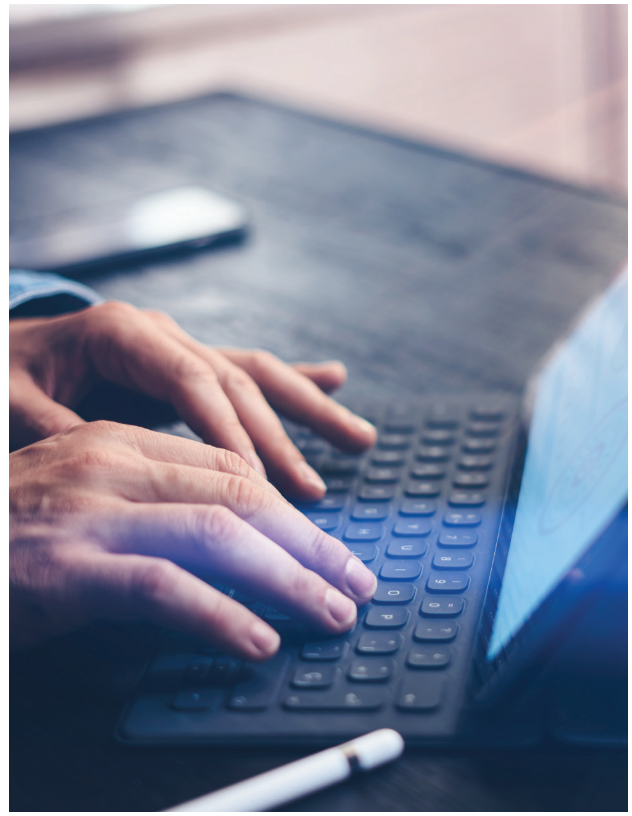
THE BEST FOLLOW-UP PRACTICES FOR MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES

BY MELISSA HANSEN

WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS AND STAGES FOR FOLLOWING UP ON MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES?

When it comes to following up with prospective members, I always use these **SEVEN** steps:

1. Respond in a timely manner
2. Use a follow up schedule
3. Create catchy subject lines to increase open rates
4. Make it personal using their name and location
5. Utilize different channels of communication
6. Provide new and valuable information
7. Track email open rates and click through to measure your success



48% of salespeople never make a single follow up attempt and it takes an average of six attempts to convert a sale. Culture has shifted to expect instant gratification so when it comes to responding to your leads and form fills, timing is everything. After the initial interaction, it is important to create a follow-up schedule for your leads. This can be done by creating reminders in your CRM system, or setting notices on your calendar. I like to follow up after two weeks, 30 days, 60 days, and 90 days. Prospects should also be added to monthly email drip campaigns.

Creating catchy subject lines is essential! Shorter subject lines are best and always remember to include their name. Prospects are more likely to open an email that says, 'Mr. Smith, the information that you requested' rather than say, 'Membership Information.'

Be conscious of how your prospect is inquiring and respond to them in the same fashion. It is important to continue to provide them with valuable information. Including links to new blog posts, your social media platforms or recent photo albums of events is a great way to keep the prospect interested and coming back. Most importantly, always track your follow up, responses and open rates.

HOW SHOULD FOLLOW-UP PRACTICES CHANGE AND BE HANDLED BASED ON HOW AN INQUIRY WAS GENERATED (MEMBER REFERRAL, RESPONSE TO AD, REAL-ESTATE LEAD, "COLD" INQUIRY, ETC.)?

Different forms of communication should be utilized when responding to leads. If you have a connection point such as a member referral or a lead from a realtor, it is always good to pick up the phone to discuss how you received their name and talk about the things/people you have in common. If you receive an inquiry via the website or a landing page, those are usually fact-finding missions. Providing a resource where prospects can learn more than they did on your website it important and always remember to ask for a time to connect (whether in person, on the phone, or via teleconference).

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE WHEN FOLLOWING UP ON MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES?

The most common mistake is not following up at all. Once you have had the opportunity to connect with a lead, it is important to find out how they would like to communicate going forward. Another mistake that is commonly made is not getting to the point fast enough. Oftentimes clubs are hesitant to give out pricing information, but it's a great way to qualify a lead to see if they would be the right fit for your club. After all, if they can't afford it or it's more than they are willing to pay, there is no sense in wasting your time following up or bringing them in for a tour. And lastly, starting emails with 'just touching base' or 'just checking in' can be a big turn off. Always provide *value* to your buyer and give them a good reason to want to open your message and reply.

WHAT ARE THE BEST SIGNS TO LOOK FOR TO JUDGE JUST HOW SERIOUS AN INQUIRY IS—OR ISN'T—AND HOW LIKELY IT IS TO LEAD TO A NEW MEMBERSHIP?

When and how is it best to involve others from the club staff, Board, and membership in follow-up approaches? Sometimes follow up should include other key members of your staff, committee, or members. If the prospective member played golf with other members, it is good to make one of your members the point person and have them follow up saying how much they enjoyed the round together and how they would be a good fit to your club. During your tour if your prospect made a connection with other team members, such as your Head Pro or a member of your management team, it would be a bonus to have them reach out and tell them how they would personally assist in onboarding them and integrating them into the club once they joined.

HAS OPERATING DURING THE PANDEMIC LED TO SOME NEW BEST PRACTICES THAT PROMISE TO HELP MAKE INQUIRY FOLLOW-UP MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE IN THE FUTURE?

Communication through the pandemic has been crucial! Everyone has craved a sense of connection and inclusivity. During the pandemic, at our club we implemented a video messaging tool that allowed us to build relationships and send personalized messages directly to the inboxes of our prospects and members. The feedback has been tremendous it's truly been a new and innovative way to connect and set ourselves apart from the rest.

ABOUT MELISSA HANSEN

Melissa Hansen is a private club membership & marketing educator that provides resources to industry professionals who are striving to get creative and think outside the box. With over ten years in the hospitality industry, Melissa has had the opportunity to learn from some of the most successful leaders in the business. Melissa is eager to share the knowledge and information she has learned and provide you with clear strategies for your membership success!

Melissa would love to hear from you so feel free to connect with her at any time. She can be reached directly at **239.216.6422** or **melissa@melissahansen.com** and be sure to visit her website too for more information at **www.melissahansen.com.**