

Research Findings
Golf Club Website Study

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MARKETING  DNA

Golf Club Websites - Market Research Conclusions

Background

Following the boom in Golf Course construction due to the increased demand for membership in the late 1980s and into the 1990s, golf clubs are now finding themselves increasingly in the position of competing for members and for incremental Green Fee revenues. As with any other business, there is a focus on managing costs.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in 2008, 65% of homes have internet access with 56% of homes having broadband internet access along with mobile internet access through GPRS and 3G.

Golf clubs have identified the need to market themselves to help raise revenue and see online as an important medium.

In addition to attracting new members, there is a requirement to maintain existing membership levels and maximise the revenue per member. There is a need to market to existing members and to give improved service levels. Once more, online techniques can contribute; low cost email communication, online news letters, promotion of non-golfing revenue generating items such as social and catering.

1. Summary Conclusions

The majority of Golf Clubs have identified their web site as being important or very important to their marketing and member management activity.

While there are notable exceptions, in general the technology used is 3 or more years old. Clubs have invested less than £3,000 in total or, put another way, a little more than the price of a decent golf ball per member.

There in general seems to be a lack of skill or an internal 'web champion' within most golf clubs and little more than 1 to 3 hours a week spent managing the web site that has been identified as being important.

2. Surprising Facts

77% of clubs revealed that the quality from their website provider to be inadequate.

No website training is offered to the majority of clubs.

Many clubs do not have a secure member's area.

A minimal number of clubs boast a nominated web committee or expert.



Lack of strategy with the use of many websites.

Lack of marketing focus.

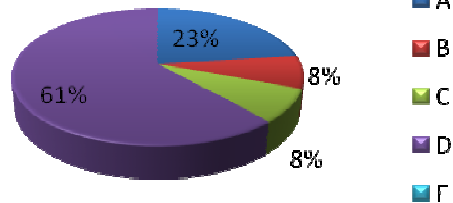
Lack of investment relative to similar sized commercial concerns outside golf.

3. Analysis of responses by question

3.1. Section A – Purpose and Investment

What is the principal purpose of your site?

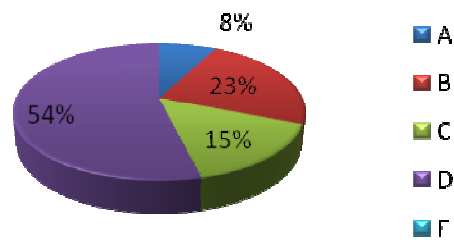
- A. Members Use
- B. Marketing
- C. Visitor Information
- D. All of the above
- E. Do not know



The majority of clubs (61%) believed that they are all important factors for having a website. Other participants mentioned that option B: Marketing was the core purpose for their website (23%) The remaining 16% shared options A & C.

How long ago was your website created?

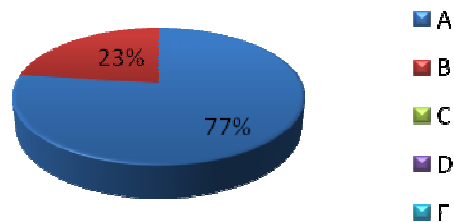
- A. Less than 1 year ago
- B. 1 – 2 years
- C. 2 – 3 years
- D. More than 3 years ago
- E. Do not know



The majority of web sites (69%) have been developed 2,3 or more years ago meaning they are unlikely to be using the latest technology.

What was your initial investment?

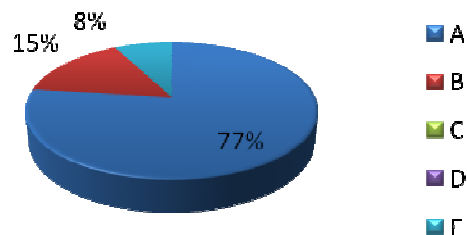
- A. Less than £3000
- B. £3000 - £6000
- C. £6000 - £9000
- D. More than £9000
- E. No information



The majority have invested less than £3,000 in this technology that they have identified as being important, that about the cost of a single Titlelist ProV1x per member.

What is your annual running cost?

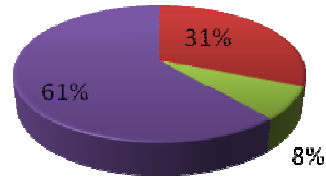
- A. Less than £1000
- B. £1000 - £2000
- C. £2000 - £4000
- D. More than £4000
- E. Do not know



Once again, the investment in maintenance and updating is insignificant.

Would you describe the investment in your website to be;

- A. Poor
- B. Average
- C. Good
- D. Very Good
- E. Do not know



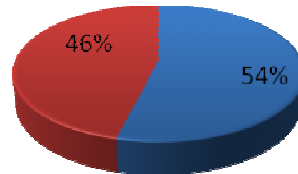
- ▣ A
- ▣ B
- ▣ C
- ▣ D
- ▣ E
- ▣ F

Despite such a low level investment, 69% of clubs thought it was Good or Very Good..

3.2. Section B – Performance and Management

Do you know how many people visit you site per month?

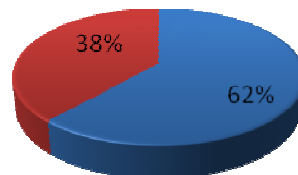
- A. Yes
- B. No



- ▣ Yes
- ▣ No

Does your site have accessible visitor statistics?

- A. Yes
- B. No

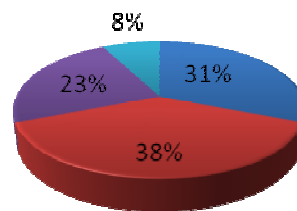


- ▣ Yes
- ▣ No

The majority of clubs are unaware of visitor traffic profiles

Which is the most regularly used area of your website?

- A. Members
- B. Visitors
- C. Corporate
- D. Other
- E. Do not know



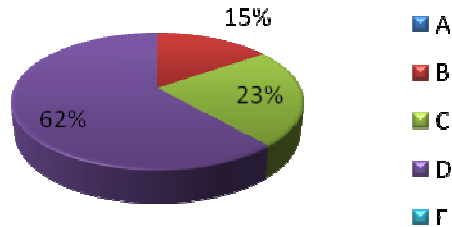
- ▣ A
- ▣ B
- ▣ C
- ▣ D
- ▣ E
- ▣ F

Given the previous answers, it can only be assumed that this evidence is anecdotal.

3.3. Section C – Sales and Marketing

How important a marketing tool is the website to the club?

- A. Not important
- B. Quite important
- C. Important
- D. Very important
- E. No opinion

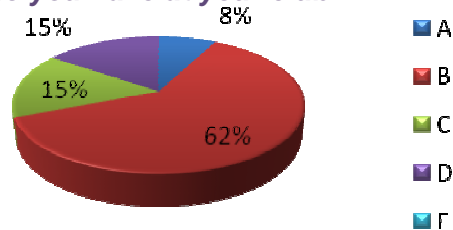


85% consider this an important or very important marketing tool and yet the investment statistics show that very little in terms of money or resources has been committed.

3.4. Section D – Administration and Back Office Functionality

How many competent web administrators do you have at your club?

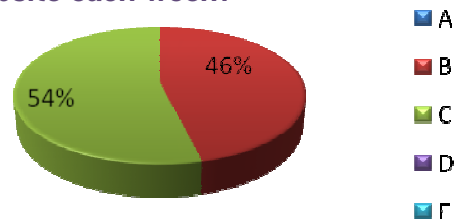
- A. None
- B. One
- C. Two
- D. More than two
- E. Unknown



A vast majority of clubs are reliant on a single individual; some have no internal resource whatsoever.

What is the collective time spent on the website each week?

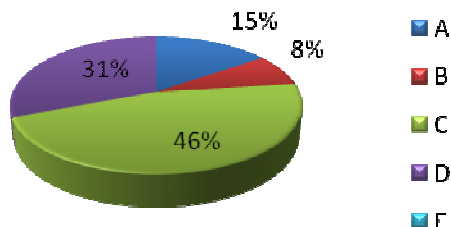
- A. None
- B. 1 hour
- C. 1 – 3 hours
- D. More than 3 hours
- E. Unknown



Very little time is invested in managing this resource that is identified as important.

How easily do you and your staff find it to update the website?

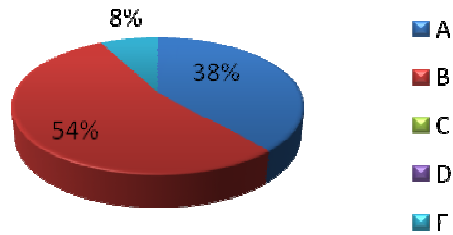
- A. Difficult
- B. Quite difficult
- C. Quite easy
- D. Easy
- E. No response



It appears that ease of use is not an issue.

Does your website have the facility to link with the club administration system?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Do not know



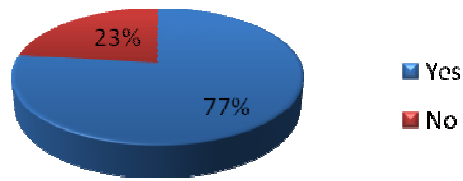
Over half the participants (54%) stated that their website and club admin system did not link together.

This appears to be a weakness in their systems, as the setup does not facilitate the immediate update of the website from the club system, and vice versa. Hence management of information between the two entities has is manual.

3.5. Section E – Members Use

Is there a secure member’s area on your website?

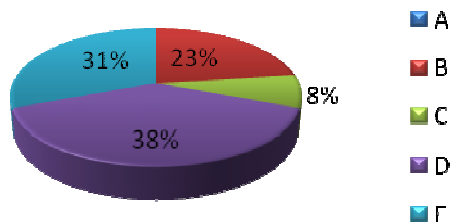
- A. Yes
- B. No



Communicating with members by post and notice board can be costly and ineffective – a secure members area would provide improved communications.

What percentage of the membership regularly accesses the member’s area?

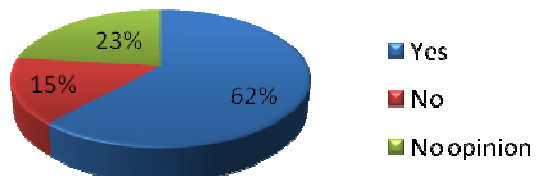
- A. Less than 10%
- B. 10 – 20%
- C. 20 – 30%
- D. More than 30%
- E. Do not know



Given the lack of access to statistics, this is likely to be anecdotal or aspirational.

Do you see this percentage rising in the future?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Do not know

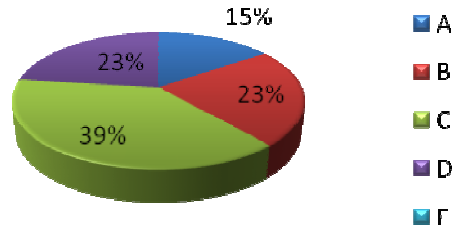


This is clearly the case.

3.6. Section F – Service quality from your website provider

Would you describe the quality of your website support to be;

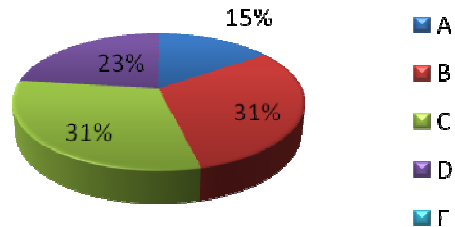
- A. Poor
- B. Average
- C. Good
- D. Very Good
- E. No opinion



This indicates a mixed standard among web service providers.

Would you describe the speed of response from your website support company to be;

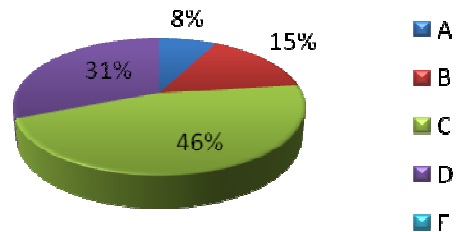
- A. Slow
- B. Average
- C. Quick
- D. Very Quick
- E. No opinion



As above.

Would you describe the ease at which you can communicate with your website provider to be;

- A. Difficult
- B. Quite difficult
- C. Easy
- D. Very easy
- E. No opinion



Communications appear to be generally good.