



Penny Hulbert

Teeing Up for Business:

How Golf Can Get You in the Game

It's a myth: deals are seldom finalized on the golf course. However, don't be confused, that is where many deal-closing relationships are made. Business golf is not a meeting moved outdoors. The fine points of a contract probably will be covered at another time. But what transpires during a round of golf can be the foundation for a lasting business relationship. Golf provides the opportunity to spend as much as 4 to 6 hours of quality time with a business client or colleague. Few other venues offer such an extended period to interact and develop mutual respect.

In 2003, Catalyst, a nonprofit organization for women in business, surveyed 705 women in Fortune 1000 companies about the factors they felt were holding them back at work. More than 40% cited the "exclusion from informal networks" as a barrier to their advancement. One of the most mentioned informal networks? GOLF.

It has been said that in people which play golf with potential hires. business world assessing

golf brings out the best and worst is why so many business leaders important clients, suppliers and Many of the rules of golf apply to the – being prepared, paying attention, situations quickly and maintaining

one's composure. The game allows a player to know your other playing partners' personalities. Situations created on the golf course reveal how the player responds to success or failure, performance under pressure, and how well he abides by the rules and ethics of the game.

These characteristics are all key aspects of business relationships. That's why business golf isn't as much about closing the deal as it is about developing the relationships that give you the ability to close the deals.

To take advantage of golf for business here are some things to keep in mind:

Know Your Purpose:

Going into a business golf opportunity without identifying a purpose is like going into a business meeting without an agenda – it isn't likely to produce the results you want! Identify what you want to get out of the time together and what your playing partners get as well.

Plan Your Outing:

Based on your business purpose, you should plan your outing the same way you plan a business meeting, a lunch meeting or presentation. Choices and details should be made and arranged in advanced to ensure they align with your business purpose. Set expectations up front for all participants, so there are no surprises.

Interaction with Others:

Focus on your business purpose. You aren't there to shoot your best round of golf ever (even though it would be nice); check yourself on every hole – are you focused on your business purpose?



Know Golf Course Etiquette:

Your golf skill is secondary. If you know golf course etiquette, everyone will enjoy joining you for a game of golf. You should know when to talk and when not to talk, where to stand when others are making a shot, how to take care of the course, where to drive the cart, pace of play, cell phone etiquette, how to tip and how to dress.

Have Basic Golf Skills:

Remember you have a day job and the goal here is business. However, a basic game is necessary. Here are some benchmarks: can you hit the ball at least a 100 yards; do you know the basic techniques for chipping, putting, pitching and sand; are you 100% confident that you know how to get around a golf course in a courteous manner?

As more and more women add golf to their repertoire for business success, there are some additional things to consider when men and women tee it up together.

Select a Course for All Players' Abilities:

Don't assume that a woman golfer will always play from the forward tees or that men should automatically play the longest yardage possible. Especially for business golf, choose a course with multiple tee boxes (rated for both men and women) and the yardage that makes the game enjoyable for all who are playing.

Viva La Difference:

In general, men do not talk much business on the golf course. However, women do. They are more prone to multitasking and therefore tend to talk more business while they play. Keep these differences in mind during your on-course conversations.

Break at the Forward Tee:

Men that are accustomed to all male foursomes, occasionally forget to stop at the forward tees for a female player's turn. To avoid this faux pas, try to keep the cart with women players in the front position while at the tee box.

To acquire and hone your golf skills, seek out a golf professional. One resource for golf programs is the PGA of America's website at www.playgolfamerica.com. For females, the Executive Women's Golf Association (EWGA) has more than 125 chapters throughout the United States offering new golfer clinics and numerous other player development programs, as well as numerous golf, networking and social activities. See www.ewga.com

Using golf for business can enhance your career and it is a sport you can enjoy throughout your life. Don't be left in the office and out of the action when you can be teeing up for business.

Penny Hulbert is the Past President of the Executive Women's Golf Association, headquartered in Palm Beach Gardens and President of Links Financial, LLC, in Tampa/FL, assisting clients in identifying the most appropriate financing program. Since the EWGA started in 1991, more than 100,000 women have benefited from membership in the organization which is dedicated to providing opportunities to learn, play, and enjoy the game of golf for business and for life. See www.ewga.com