



NETWORKING ON THE GOLF COURSE

Most golfers hit the golf course to enjoy a little health competition, or simply because they love playing the game. Some golfers use their skill to improve upon business relations. A great place to schedule business meetings can be on the green. A golf course is also a great place to meet new people and make business connections. Strategic use of time on the golf course can yield results, so, work on your business savvy and enjoy your favorite sport at the same time with these networking tips.

BUSINESS CARDS

Don't show up empty handed, if you intend to network. Throw some business cards in your golf bag, even if networking is not your main goal of the day. If someone wants to make personal plans after a day of golf, it is easy to hand them a business card with your contact information on it. It is always a good idea to keep some cards in your golf bag.

A GOLF BUSINESS OUTING

It can be best to plan a business tee time with a meal in mind, especially if you are planning a round of golf with business associates or partners. Taking your discussion to the lunch table or a happy hour bar, can be the best way to connect and share future business plans or ideas. This added time should allow you to go into more detail about business projects or whatever else you wish to discuss.

SPONSORSHIP IS ANOTHER FORM OF PARTICIPATION

Often, a firm is promoted in pre-event marketing materials, as well as at the event itself. Some organizations even list their sponsors on their websites. Imagine all that promotion from simply writing a cheque! Don't stop there, though; go to the event. Sponsors at all levels usually have opportunities to go out and shake many hands, and people are often more open since they are relaxed and having fun.

Hole-sponsorship is an excellent value at tournaments. It comes with the advertising perks, individual signage at the hole, and perhaps the opportunity to engage in a private "meet and greet." This is a chance to really score by leaving a memorable impression.

GIVE A GIFT

A small token for each golfer is always appreciated. Consider a ball marker or golf ball with your company logo, bottled water, or a snack. Take it a step further by giving your hole a theme or providing a fun game to keep the golfers occupied while they wait. Remember to keep activities short so you do not slow play and be courteous by being quiet when players

are teeing off. Have business cards ready and a small notebook to record any information for follow-up after the tournament. Leave your corporate brochures at home—golfers generally will not take brochures on the course, and they tend to blow away in the summer wind.

BE SAFE

Finally, be prepared behind the scenes. Take a portable, outdoor awning for protection, sunscreen, and plenty of water to stay hydrated. Always have the phone number to the clubhouse so you can be picked up for breaks or emergencies. Most holes are not within short walking distance.

DON'T PUSH IT

Most people are out on the course to enjoy a day of being outdoors, hanging with friends, and spending time working on their swing. It is important to remember this. If no one wants to talk about business, it is important to let it go. Networking cannot be pushed. Golf was not designed specifically as a networking event, so try breaking the ice, and talking about other things. What you do for business and where you work will eventually come up.

Reading your audience can be key when networking. Some people may just want to play golf and leave the discussion of business behind at the office. Networking on the green can be a great way to make connections in world of business, but there is a right way and a wrong way of doing it. Playing a game of golf can be a low-key way to get to know new or potential business associates or propose potential business ideas. Do not blow your chance by being too pushy and remember to enjoy the game as well.