

# Giving your members back the control they want over tee times

**Members of golf clubs tend to expect to walk on to the first tee and be able to play, whatever the time of day. While some may actually bother to check what's on, others find themselves behind a society or match, and proceed to get annoyed because they have to keep waiting... and usually make their point in the bar to other members, and sometimes to the club secretary.**

But mention tee time booking, and the same people just don't want to think that their club would even contemplate the possibility. So it's interesting to learn that at the clubs that are installing such systems, the members – to their surprise – are finding that one of the main benefits is to put control back into their own hands in terms of being able to avoid busy periods, walk on to the tee and play!

## So which booking system's the best?

For some golf clubs tee time booking systems are an everyday management tool. But with several on the market all saying that they're the best, it's interesting to hear what Ian Bailey, the driving force behind Great Hadham GC in Herts, has to say: "The BRS Golf system's easily the best – and we know because we've tried out three others!"

The club had originally been using a single site 'offline' booking system that was part of their club administration software from MH Systems. But Ian could see that online was the way to go if his

visitors were going to be able to check availability, book and pay – without needing to tie the club down with 'phonecalls and paperwork.

The first online tee time booking system they tried out was just too complex, and took too long to process each booking; after a three month trial it was rejected by the club's Committee.

The next system had the speed Ian wanted, but lacked the ability to capture crucial detail: "We had no idea who was actually playing on the course – we had a name, but no information regarding whether they were a member or visitor, which membership category, phone number, e-mail address, or initial, so that one Mr Smith could be distinguished easily from another!" Revenue protection therefore became an issue, and so the system was ditched.

## Third time lucky: BRS Golf's Tee Time Manager

By May 2006 however, with the new season in full swing, Ian read about a new system from BRS Golf in Inside Line, and contacted Rory and Brian Smith to find out more about their system of online tee time booking. He registered on their website to try out the 24 hour demonstration version, had a look at one or two that had been installed elsewhere, and decided to give the BRS system a trial.

What was obvious to Ian, who was by now pretty well versed in online tee time systems, was that BRS's Tee Time Manager had the speed – it's very quick to use

and to process – and the user-friendliness, which is essential for first time users like visitors. After a brief trial Ian decided the club should go live immediately in early June 2006, but that they would keep the paperwork system as a back up.

## Ditch all that paperwork!

The robustness of the BRS system and the team behind it nurtured a great deal of confidence in Ian and his club's committee, to the extent that they felt they could ditch all the paperwork systems associated with tee time booking, and rely 100% on the BRS system instead. Ian soon found that the members' module could go live by the Autumn of 2006, so that they too now use the system to book tee times for themselves as well.

## So how was it for Ian and his members?

So, as an experienced user of online tee time booking systems, what does Ian think of the BRS system now? "The feedback's been fine and very positive. We've cut down on the time taken up in the office with 'phone calls and paperwork, which has freed up myself and others. The members can easily see what the usage of the course is on any given day, and make their own arrangements and book their tee times accordingly."

## No more annoyed members...

"But the unexpected benefit has been to stop the 'annoyed members'! Whenever we had a society, we inevitably had complaints from the unfortunate members who found themselves stuck behind the society. Our members have always understood that the club needs visitors and societies, but now with the BRS system they can make sure they book a tee time that is well away from a visiting group's timing. They also like booking a tee time from the convenience of their home or office. It's much easier and makes far more sense than going all the way to the club to find that the tee's busy.

"Our visitors still pay at the club. We like the potential of the BRS system to enable them to pay online, however, and this will happen at the end of March."

"We're extremely happy with the BRS system. The functionality's excellent, and having tried two other systems, we knew more clearly the pros and cons of such applications. The BRS team's very good as well, and whatever we've asked for in the way of support, they've delivered and we've worked very well together."

"I think it also helps that Rory and Brian are both keen golfers and play at a members' club. They really understand what we need and what we face as managers of golf clubs!"

"The BRS Golf system's easily the best – and we know because we've tried out three others!"

The screenshot shows the website for Great Hadham Golf & Country Club. At the top is the club's logo. Below it is a navigation bar with 'Home'. The main heading is 'Members' Internet Tee Reservation Service'. The text below reads: 'Welcome to the Great Hadham Golf and Country Club Internet Tee Reservation Service. This service allows members to book a tee time over the Internet and get instant on-screen and email confirmation of their booking.' It then states: 'This booking service is an integral part of the club's live computerised booking system, hence tee time availability is accurate and up to date to the second from anywhere in the world.' There are two buttons: 'Click here to register to use the booking system.' and 'Click here to register' (with a play icon). Below that is 'Click here to book a tee time if you are registered to use this service.' and 'Book a tee time' (with a play icon). A section titled 'Booking Process' follows, with the text: 'We have tried to make booking process as straightforward to use as possible so that you can make your booking, quickly and easily. All bookings are completed in the following 4 stages,'. The first stage is visible: 'Stage 1: Select the day you want to play'.

