

Woodlands Manor manages the online way with BRS

The traditional management tool of a golf club has been or in some cases, still is the paper-based Club Diary, the bible of everything that is being held and played at the club; and which – with luck – contains all the details needed to set the event or day up, account for it all and invoice it completely accurately later on.

The drawback is that the effectiveness of this tool depends on someone remembering all the things to ask of someone making an enquiry, and the efficiency with which that information is recorded, communicated to the rest of the clubhouse team, then turned into accurate invoices and thus income to the club. Even then, extracting reports such as projected income from future meetings or visits is extremely laborious and time consuming, to say the least.

Software-based reservation systems – better

If the reservations are made using an offline software bookings programme, enquiries can be much easier to handle, as all the necessary questions to ask become a matter of following the various boxes that require an answer – when, how many, what services, etc. Similarly, confirmations and invoices become a simple matter of clicking a mouse to produce a standardised letter or form with the details as agreed. Reporting can also be much more efficient, if that facility is available, along with other benefits such as the contact details being automatically captured for future marketing needs.

Online with BRS – best because it's comprehensive

Now combine all the above with a tee time reservation system, put it all online so that it works in real time, make sure those reports

are available, and your club has got a very powerful management tool.

That's what Woodlands Manor has found with the BRS Golf reservation management system. Having looked at other tee time systems and offline booking systems, Ken Thornton, Director, saw that with one or two tweaks to tailor the BRS model to his club's own ways of working, he and his team at Woodlands Manor have nearly everything they need to manage, account for and record the visitors, societies, functions, events and competitions at the club.

Online means you're open for business when the club is closed

Being online 24/7 it also meant that visitors could contact the club to book and pay for tee times online at any time the office was closed, just by going to the club's (ClubView) website, and going to the bookings page. In addition, a major benefit is that each member of staff that deals with the various things being booked in at the club could see what was going on in real time – no more having to send bits of paper and notes to someone else, a recipe for some eventual disaster.

At Woodlands Manor, incoming enquiries for societies and functions are handled by one of Ken's assistants in the club office. The Professional, Phil Womack, whose shop had traditionally dealt with visitors and green fees, now handles all these bookings using

the BRS reservation system. He or one of his assistants can now record and secure contact and purchase details, all of which result in immediate payment whether the visitor is in the shop or phoning in to book a tee time. When that happens, an e-mail goes around the management team so that they are all made aware of the new situation.

Getting the time a member wants, at the time the club wants them to play

Phil also deals with the members' bookings, and with 300+ of the members e-mail addresses now registered with the club, it's much simpler and easier for everyone to get the game they want at the time they want it. The club can control what times are available, and whether those are 2, 3, or 4 ball formats, or booked out for competitions. And of course, any bookings that are made and confirmed can't be duplicated – once it's booked, no-one else can accidentally over-ride and book the same time.

User-friendliness – better than any other system

"With another system we tried, it wasn't easy to understand visually, the graphics were too complex and key things were indistinct. It was therefore difficult to assess quickly, or read what was actually available to someone on the telephone wanting a date or time for something. Nor could you see the whole screen





which was very irritating, neither was there an online payment facility.”

“The BRS system is far and away the best we’ve seen for user-friendliness. It makes things much easier for everyone in the Pro Shop and it’s all in real time, so there’s no chance of double bookings.”

At the office end of things

In the main office, Gill Grant is primarily responsible for handling incoming enquiries for bookings at the club. “All I have to do is look at the screen, check what times or facilities are available, and work through the various details we need to confirm a booking. It helps us to remember to ask about extra services or notes on special catering needs, and things like buggies, club hire, trolley hire, meal packages, room hire etc.”

“When the details are captured on screen, there’s a summary page with all the details telling us who, when, how many and what facilities and services have been booked. It’s really that easy and simple. I can then send that summary by e-mail to confirm what we’ve agreed to the organiser, along with the amount to be paid. That saves a lot of paperwork, my time, and of course postage costs. If I need to double-check at any time, I just click on the time of eg. a tee reservation and up come the notes I made, ie. if they wanted a mini-breakfast, payment notes, etc.

“And of course, all this information gets fed into the reporting systems so that for example, we can forecast the income impact of all the

various reservations being made at the club for whatever time period – at the click of a mouse!”

“It’s also easy to make changes. Inevitably, group bookings call us back to say that so and so can’t play, etc. So we just change the number coming, and the new amounts are automatically calculated, all ready for us to confirm on the phone what the new amount for payment will be, and if that holds for the day itself, the invoice as well.”

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What I do like is that we can all see the same tee sheet, so if some visitors have booked at eg. 9.10, I can tell a society organiser that they can have the times from 9.20 onwards. I don’t have to go to the Pro Shop to double check. Likewise, they don’t need to check with my end of things!”

Operational benefits

Gill: “It’s much quicker for handling telephone enquiries. We’ve all got everything we need in

front of us on screen. It’s much quicker for the caller. And it creates a much more professional and efficient impression to societies and visitors, let alone the members.”

“The support from BRS is great – they’re terribly helpful, and it was actually relatively easy to learn how to use the system. It’s certainly easy to use on a day to day basis.”

The Director’s perspective

Ken Thornton: “The BRS system is a very good management tool and is a major step forward in bringing technology to golf clubs. It is something that many clubs seem to hide from and no doubt within the next five to ten years I believe everybody will expect to book either on line, via their mobile phone or have a 24 hour telephone service.”

“One of the big benefits of an on line system I believe, is that money can be taken with the booking. There is virtually no other product you can buy where you don’t have to pay in advance i.e. theatre tickets, cheap flights etc.

Using the BRS system means I can make much better use of my staff’s time and skills, keep my administrative costs really tight, and keep an eye on all the things I need to know in order to manage the club as a business much more effectively.”

