

Bramshaw GC switches to online course management



Bramshaw GC lies in the heart of the New Forest, near Lyndhurst. It has two 18 hole courses, the Forest and the Manor, which couldn't be more different; built in 1880, the Forest course is the oldest course in Hampshire and with its open aspects, meandering streams, rolling heathland and occasional New Forest ponies and deer, is in complete contrast to the Manor Course. This was built in 1970, and has been carved very effectively out of mature woodland.

Ian Baker is the General Manager, and his responsibilities include not just looking after Bramshaw's two courses, but also Dunwood Manor, another 18 hole course some 10 minutes' drive away, and The Bell Inn, a 25 room hotel and restaurant. Adding to his management challenges are the different club cultures of Bramshaw and Dunwood: while both are proprietary, Dunwood has always had tee time booking and its members are perfectly happy with that feature. Bramshaw doesn't and Ian's not about to try and change the membership's minds!

Keeping everyone up to speed – management challenges with paper-based diaries

One of the first issues that Ian wanted to get to grips with on all three courses was the booking and reservations management. "We had a paper-based system, a diary with three columns per page for Bramshaw Forest,

Bramshaw Manor and Dunwood. While it worked perfectly well in its own right, it became very problematic because of the number of staff and management needing to know about the booking information: besides the main office, there's our club Professional, Clive Bonner, the catering staff, and of course, the reception and GM at The Bell Inn as a lot of the bookings would be for guests planning golf breaks."

"Keeping everyone up to speed meant bits of paper flying around, with reservation and guest details being saved in Excel and mailed between staff and different sites, eg. The Bell Inn reception; and in Word for the Members, so that they could see all the bookings ahead on the notice board. This involved duplications, and things didn't always work as well as they needed to! I saw the BRS Golf online booking system at one of the ClubView golf days, and was given a demonstration on-screen in my office at Bramshaw, which Brian Smith did over

the telephone from Belfast while he took me through their demonstration version."

"I could see that an online system that was able to be seen by everyone in the network was the answer. But it meant that the development team at BRS had to do a lot of work to tailor their system to my requirements, chief of which was a tee time booking page that showed daily tee times for both our two courses, the Forest and the Manor. The third, Dunwood, would be easier to access by simply switching to its own dedicated on-screen booking site and pages."

Easier to operate

Besides the benefit of knowing that everyone in the team can see new information in realtime, there's a host of other advantages to using the BRS system. Ian Baker: "One of the simplest features they added was a scroll down within the page, so that we can now see and scroll down all the tee times for a day, without losing any of the tool bar functions at the top

of the page. The main advantage is that all the data we capture about any society or company, its organiser, guests, etc. is all retained on the system. So we always have it to hand, and can refer to it easily on screen whenever we need to, or when they phone up, for example, to make a change to the booking."

"It has also been designed to show us the different types of bookings in colour, so that we immediately can see which are Members, Green Fee visitors, Societies, Companies, or Hotel guests, etc. And because it all works in real time, Clive can see immediately if any of the bookings include things that he needs to know about and organise, such as trolley or buggy rentals. The Bookings Summary report is critical for the caterers, and now they can see what their own needs are going to be, well ahead of the actual dates, so that they can arrange food orders, etc."

"The BRS booking system has also been changed to show us when there's maintenance work being undertaken on the courses, so that on a day-today basis, we can always see if we need to push an enquiry to a more suitable tee time. Another on-page feature is our Daily Pin codes for the access control system, so that we can tell guests what the number is for the day concerned that will allow them past the keypad entry system."

Making Bramshaw look more professional

"Of course, there are always changes being made to bookings, but these are really easy to handle. We can see what they originally required, take on board the new information, and immediately we can tell them if there are any changes to the cost of the day, and so on. It also makes us look very efficient and professional in the way we deal with organisers, which I believe is one of the reasons so many of them keep coming back."

"One of the neatest features, and one that saves us a great deal of time in the office, is the ability to e-mail a standardised confirmation letter with all the key details of the booking, to the organiser as an attachment. We can attach up to four documents, but usually it's the booking confirmation and the dress code. And of course, on the day itself, we simply confirm the numbers and the invoice is produced automatically. So our accounting and cash flow are more efficiently managed as well."

"And of course, we can now synchronise things between the golf club and The Bell Inn, making sure that our guests' information, room/dinner reservations and tee bookings are working

in complete harmony, so that the service we provide on arrival is really seamless."

Far more effective reporting

"Compared to a paper diary, the reporting's vastly superior – virtually anything I want is just a click away, whereas the diary meant hours of analysis. I can judge from the tee time page the format flow, ie. how many 2, 3 or 4 balls we've got on the course; how many guest rounds we're doing and what they're worth; and even a breakdown of all the bookings made or being made, so that for example, we can justify to the Members the exact visitor usage of 'their' course, should they happen to feel that 'the first tee's always busy!' It's currently running at 82% availability for members for all tee times, but sometimes it's necessary to show them the proof."

"All in all, the BRS booking system's just what I wanted. It took a while to develop and deliver, and the BRS team of Brain and Rory Smith can take a lot of credit for being prepared to develop and write all the new features I wanted – but it's making a real difference to the way we work, and it's much more reassuring knowing that my team can see what's going on everyday, instead of wondering if all the bits of paper are in the right place to be read and acted on!"

Forest				Manor			
Tee Time	18 Holes	Res. Name	Res. Type	1	2	3	4
09:30	18	Bournemouth Alliance	Society				
09:39	18	Bournemouth Alliance	Society				
09:48	18	Bournemouth Alliance	Society				
09:57	18	Bournemouth Alliance	Society				
10:06	18	Bournemouth Alliance	Society				
10:15	18	Bournemouth Alliance	Society				
10:24	18	Bournemouth Alliance	Society				

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Green Fee Category	Price	Number	Total
1 Society - 36 Holes (20-33 Golfers on the Day) - £44	22.00	33	726.00
2			

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