

Inside Line



Making golf club management more effective

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Online Booking is growing fast



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Over 300 clubs are already enjoying the benefits, thanks to BRS

While the EGU "Are You Ready?" campaign is highlighting to clubs the need to promote themselves to golfers, it is essential to have the right tools to exploit the rapidly growing online golf market. Thanks to BRS, over 300 golf clubs are already doing this successfully.

With over 300 clubs, 105,000 members and 90,000 visitors using their system in the last 12 months, BRS is not only the market leader in the UK and Ireland in online booking and tee time management, but from the 7 million bookings that have gone through their system, they can draw some interesting conclusions and market trends.

In 2008 alone, using their BRS systems these clubs have:

- Enabled their members to make over 1.5 million bookings
- Attracted £1.5 million in online tee time revenue booked through clubs' websites
- Attracted hundreds of new memberships
- Sent on average 2 e-newsletters a month to their members and visitors using the BRS marketing feature.

The online revenue figure through club websites alone* has increased by 450% over the past 24 months, reinforcing the almost exponential growth rate of online bookings. A relatively new user, Aberdovey GC, soon found the system has earned its keep, as Manager Ian Hamilton explains: "With BRS our visitor green fee revenue is up circa 35% on the same period as last year." (*this figure excludes revenue via channels such as teeofftimes.co.uk and teetimes.co.uk)

Shock: members prefer online booking!

Besides the sheer growth and volume of online golf, one of the most surprising statistics is the popularity of online booking with members, so if your Committee still likes to think 'We don't do tee time booking', it seems they're out of touch with what members actually want. Childwall GC in the North West is a classic example, as Club Manager Peter Bowen explains: "Online tee time booking for members has been amazingly successful at Childwall, thanks to BRS. I used to hear all the usual objections; now, we're even getting members booking while they're on holiday abroad, because they can. One delightful chap e-mailed me to tell me he was making an 'international booking' from Majorca; another regularly books online while he's travelling around the UK during the week."

25% of all the golf club members in Ireland are using BRS to book tee times, and at clubs in the UK with BRS, members actively prefer to book online. Just like visitor booking, it's a habit that is growing rapidly as the graph overleaf illustrates:

"Online tee time booking for members has been amazingly successful at Childwall, thanks to BRS." Peter Bowen, Club Manager

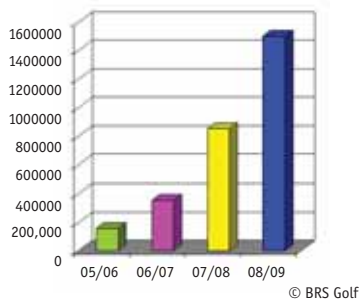
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» Online Booking is growing fast

Over 300 clubs are already enjoying the benefits, thanks to BRS



BRS MEMBERS BOOKINGS

- In the UK and Ireland, over 104,000 members are now using BRS to book casual tee times and competition tee times
- Over 3 million member bookings were made in the last 5 years.

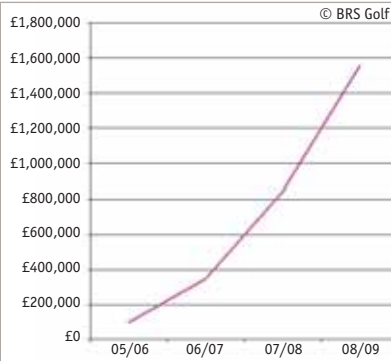
The simple fact is the online world is changing golfing habits, especially the way we book our golf. Brian Smith, Director of BRS Golf, has a very clear message for golf clubs: "The majority of members as well as visitors prefer to book online and clubs in the UK and Ireland should make their online strategy and presence a top priority. But this is not just about bookings, it's also about data capture, marketing and communication. The online bandwagon is rolling, and clubs with a BRS system are already enjoying the benefits."

Online Visitor Revenue Growth: 450% increase in 24 months

How fast are things moving? In Ireland, a country that's at the forefront of golf club development and marketing, just under 50% of golf clubs are fully online with e-mail, website and tee time booking. It's worth noting that 90% of these clubs use BRS Golf. So let's look at the hard facts over the last 24 months:

BRS ONLINE BOOKINGS VALUES

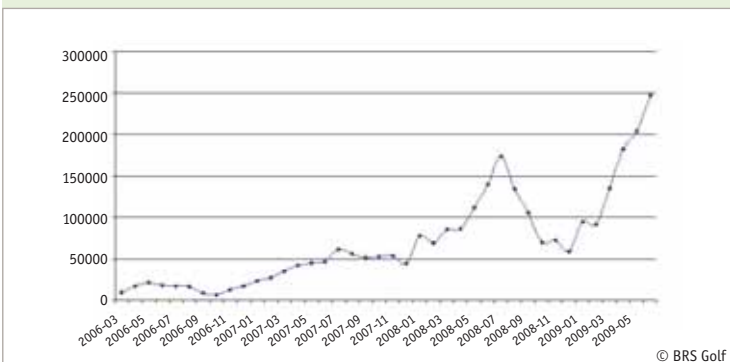
- Online bookings through BRS grew 450% in the last two years
- The average online revenue per club per year has grown by 230% from £4000 to £9100
- £2.4 Million and 130,000 visitors in the last 24 months
- Average green fee value is £18.46p, ranging from £100+ at Royal St. Georges to £10 for special offers.



Online booking growth and seasonal variation

Another major reason for having an on line booking system is to enable your club to ride the wave when the season kicks off and the nomads start looking hard for courses to play at. As this graph below shows:

- A staggering £250,000 was taken in June 2009, up £110,000 on June last year
- The impact of seasonal golf on online booking habits is well illustrated.



≈ Total online bookings per month through the club website of clubs using BRS

"Most of our customers find that their BRS system pays for itself many times over, so don't wait for online booking to pass you by: now is a great time to start!"

Yield Management is better with BRS Golf

Key to online booking is effective yield management and BRS can provide a club with the all tools for the job. The tee time booking reports enables you to see which periods are popular ie. peak, and which are less so, ie. off peak. You then decide what rate to set your green fees for the off peak times in order to encourage people to those times.

Gary Henry, Manager Galgorm Castle GC uses the BRS Golf reports to analyse the business year on year, month on month, and to see how he can move the rates around to encourage golfers to take up quieter slots: "We have green fees running from £17 to £45, but it all depends on the reports I get from the BRS system as to which times and rates we push." So for Galgorm, yield management is another benefit that flows directly from usage of the BRS system.

In addition to this BRS has also integrated their system to third party marketing companies such as Teeofftimes.co.uk and Teetimes.co.uk, giving the BRS customers access to over 500,000 golfers in the UK alone. These golfers are now emailed on a weekly basis with offers and initiatives run by these distribution companies, increasing the amount of pay and play golf at participating clubs.

Marketing: BRS is much more than an online tee booking system

The BRS system enables you to market your club to visitors and societies to bring in incremental revenue and attract new memberships. Galgorm Castle, a top 30 golf club in Ireland, is a proactive marketer exploiting the BRS Golf system, and GM Gary Henry explains how he does it: "We're focused on two databases, members and visitors. The BRS system enables us to set up an e-newsletter the members' database to remind them of member-get-member incentives, and this has helped pull in 80 new members."

"We e-newsletter the 700 or so visitors monthly, and we attract more e-mail addresses with a promotional offer run at the Club with data capture on our score cards for a break at our sister hotel. I now expect an average of 20 replies within 24 hours from visitors when we mail them, so we don't need to advertise regionally as much."

Society Golf revenues benefit as well

What about that staple of the golf club revenues, the society golfers? According to Gary Henry at Galgorm, the BRS Golf system helps this income stream as well: "We use the database we've built up of society organizers for the Christmas card and society pack posting. We also include all the organizers when we mail visitors about group and society packages and promotions, and that works very well both to remind the organizers, and to increase our society bookings generally."

"When we get society bookings, we always mail back a confirmation, and with that is always a reminder that our Pro Shop is the ideal place for gifts, prizes, and so on."

The moral of the story: do it now while the season lasts!

Brian Smith thinks there is a simple message behind all these facts and trends: "Get your online strategy set out, get the right tools for the job and you will benefit in many ways. Over the last 6 months BRS Golf have introduced various pricing and payment options including an option to get the BRS Club Diary Module free of charge in return for tee times – just visit our website www.brsgolf.com for further details."

"Most of our customers find that their BRS system pays for itself many times over, so don't wait for online booking to pass you by: now is a great time to start!"

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