



Chester-Le-Street Golf Club County Durham



Improving online tee time sales and capitalising on demand

➔ The starting point

Chester-Le-Street Golf Club in County Durham is a beautiful parkland course which offers great views across an historic landscape.

The club wanted to expand its online sales of tee times and in August 2017 it appointed The Revenue Club to advise on the best method of doing this. The Revenue Club are promoted as a supplier through England Golf's preferred partners and suppliers programme.

- ▶ **No clear direct online booking function on the club's website**
- ▶ **No digital marketing strategy/calendar**
- ▶ **No ongoing measurement of costs generated from selling online**

At the time, the club was using software to manage their tee sheet, and third parties to sell tee times online. The club was giving their software supplier two tee times a day in lieu of payment and was also paying a commission of 20% on all online sales through third party distribution channels.



First steps

After an initial face-to-face consultation and appraisal of existing sales and technology arrangements, the club had a trial month to see what difference The Revenue Club could make. This led to a 16% uplift in online sales – and the realisation that the club wasn't capitalising on online demand because there was:

It became very clear that a high proportion of the club's online sales were the barter times for which they received no revenue. Sales which actually generated real revenue were very low in comparison. It was obvious that the club should offer visitors the chance to book tee times through its own website.



SUCCESS STORY

Chester-Le-Street Golf Club County Durham



Direct bookings

The first step was to get the tee sheet software's booking engine set up in order to allow the club to sell direct to their customers. This came at no additional cost as the club was already entitled to use the software under their existing arrangement. The Revenue Club also conducted a review of their presence on third party websites, improving course imagery and arranging for the club to sell via distribution websites which were not automatically included as part of their software deal.



Digital marketing

To drive more business directly to the club, their basic website was replaced by a more visually appealing site, designed by Golf Working, which showcased the course. Combined with some sound search engine optimisation and social media promotion, this started to generate more web traffic.

Social media activity had been sporadic in the past with various different contributors. The club took responsibility for this and allocated roles. The Revenue Club promoted the club with timely posts and regular email communications to complement the new website and point customers towards the booking engine.



Dynamic pricing

To capitalise on the additional online interest, it was important to pitch the green fee pricing at the right level. A full review of the price structure was carried out, based primarily on historic sales and course use. This was then complemented by twice-weekly 'rate sweeps.' These use a number of different factors to project demand, such as: weather, lead time, competitor rates, big sporting events, booking channel etc.



67%
INCREASE
ONLINE
SALES

Next Steps

This activity took place over the second half of the year and resulted in a 67% increase in year on year online net sales. However, as the club's profile increased, it became apparent that it was losing out by giving away two barter tee times a day, in exchange for the technology to take the online bookings.



500%
INCREASE
GREEN FEE
REVENUE

A cost analysis by The Revenue Club showed that by paying outright for tee sheet software, the golf club would realise a far greater share of the profits from their online sales. The existing barter arrangement software was replaced with a new tee sheet paid for by cash and the club suddenly saw their online green fee revenue increase by over 500% year on year in two months.



WHAT THE CLUB SAID

“One of the key reasons for employing The Revenue Club was to increase the average price of our tee times by having more control and management in place. This was difficult to do internally as we have a small management team at the club, and our time is stretched over various tasks. The team helped us transform our digital presence in order to better target the online golfer. The results have been fantastic so far; we have more than doubled our online green fee revenue for the first two months of the year. The Revenue Club is continuing to market and dynamically price our tee times.”

Colin Henderson,
Honorary Secretary