

# *Getting Your Charity Golf Tournament Started Right*



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Excerpted from "*Charity Golf Tournaments: A Survivor's Notebook*"  
with new original material by the author  
Orion Project Publications  
20755 Bay Shore Drive  
Tyler, Texas 75762  
(903) 825-6454  
[tomking@broadwayinternet.com](mailto:tomking@broadwayinternet.com)  
[www.charitygolftournament.net](http://www.charitygolftournament.net)

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# To Golf or not to Golf, that is the question.....

**M**ark Twain once called golf “A good walk spoiled”. Twain’s jibe at golf as a pastime accurately reflects the love/hate relationship many golfers have with the sport. It’s not just golfers, however, who have mixed feelings about golf. Charity golf tournaments often inspire the same confused emotions among the volunteers and organizers who host them. Yet, despite the hard work, the headaches and the risk, the charity golf tournament remains one of the nonprofit world’s most popular special event fund-raisers.

So, why are golf tournaments so popular? How do we pull together such a complex special event, make sure everyone has fun and make money for our charities at the same time? Like any special event, the answers aren’t simple. Organizing and carrying off a successful tournament is as complex as producing any entertainment event, starting a small business or organizing an art festival. Yet, while it’s true that golf tournaments can be exhausting, time consuming and fraught with risk, if you do them right, hosting charity golf tournaments for your organization can be satisfying and profitable. *Ultimately, a charity golf tournament may be the hardest work you’ve ever loved.*

## **Have you ever worked as one of the following?**

- Development director/fund-raiser
- PR director/fund-raiser
- Executive director/fund-raiser
- Program director/fund-raiser
- Anything else/fund-raiser

If you have held one of these “slash” fund-raiser jobs, then, you have probably encountered the charity golf tournament in one of its many sobering incarnations. Maybe you have inherited an already up and running tournament. More likely, however, one of your board members or your executive director suddenly noticed that there are a lot of other charity golf tournaments going on in the neighborhood. “Hey,” the thinking goes, “We need to get in on that action.” There are a lot of ways your agency can reach the momentous decision to get into charity golf. Often the decision gets made for you by well-meaning bosses, board members or powerful friends of your organization and suddenly you find yourself with responsibility for guiding a process that has developed frightening momentum and may already be headed in the wrong direction through no fault of your own. Your challenge is to get this runaway train under control and back on the track and that’s often very tough to do.

## **SO ASK YOURSELF:**

*Is this such a good idea for my organization?*

## THE GO/NO GO TEST

*Ask yourself the questions below before you commit to a tournament. You'll be glad you did.*

### **MOTIVATION: Why do we want to do this?**

*Select the reason(s) that best describes why you, your board think a tournament's a good idea.*

- It's good public relations.
- It's a great way to make money
- It's a good way to prospect for donors
- It's a lot of fun for the staff
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **WHAT HAVE WE GOT?**

#### **How Would I Describe My Organization's (Real Or Proposed) Golf Tournament?**

- I have inherited an annual golf tournament that is either dead or dying
- I have taken over a wildly successful golf tournament
- I have been approached by a golfer/board member who wants to put together a "golf-tournament-to-raise-money".
- I have been approached by a corporate type person who wants to host a "charity-golf-tournament-and-we're-looking-for-a-charity-to-benefit".
- Someone (maybe not me) has decided that my organization "needs" to add a golf tournament to go along with a bunch of other special events we already host
- Someone in your organization ordered you to organize a tournament because your organization needs to make a lot of money quick to meet budget.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **WHO IDEA WAS THIS ANYWAY:**

#### **Did the idea to do a golf tournament come from inside your organization or outside?**

\_\_\_\_ Inside (staff member)    \_\_\_\_ Outside (board member, volunteer, donor prospect)

#### **MADE ANY MONEY YET?** If you have completed a tournament, how much did it net after expenses? *(Complete the equation below to figure out the events per hour earnings.)*

(Net Profit: \$ \_\_\_\_\_) ÷ (Total staff/volunteer hours) \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per/hr.

### **ANY OF THESE SOUND FAMILIAR?**

From the following list select all the bad reasons for doing a golf tournament.

- An organizational budget crisis
- Because you have always done one
- Because a golf tournament will make your organization look classy
- Someone else will do all the work for you (they promise)
- The board wants to make money quickly
- Everybody likes golf
- You want to build you organization's reputation
- To avoid basic fund-raising

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## GO/NO GO TEST - Answer Sheet:

### MOTIVATION: Why do we want to do this?

**It's good public relations.**

*On the face of it, this by itself sounds like a good reason to put on a golf tournament. After all, which of our organizations could not use some good public relations? How could a little "name recognition and a happy-time-had-by-all" have any negatives to it? Unfortunately, a public scandal, incident or problem associated with your institute can hurt your tournament or unfortunate things that can happen at your special event that can hurt the image of your organization. **Public relations is something you have to attend to in relation to your special event, but isn't a good enough reason by itself to host a special event.***

**It's a great way to make money**

***A charity golf tournament is not necessarily a good way to make money.** It does have its advantages. The availability of willing volunteers for this sort of thing means you don't have to pay much for staff. You can use guilt to manipulate people into coming or buying sponsorships. Sponsors feel guilty turning you down most of the time, especially if you're a good cause. Others simply feel good contributing and that works just as well. So, there are some things that make it easier to make money with a special event like a golf tournament simply because you are a charity. But, just because it's easier to make a profit on a charity event, doesn't mean you're guaranteed to come out in the black. Like any entertainment-based special event, you are often competing directly with other entertainment events for the same audience and **YOU CAN LOSE MONEY IF YOUR TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE DOESN'T DO A GOOD JOB!***

**It's a good way to prospect for donors**

*Yes, this can be true, but only if you invite good donor prospects to the tournament. The best way to do this is to make the event attractive by making it exclusive. Now, that sounds like another no-brainer to a seasoned development officer, but once again it's not that simple (or obvious to the neophyte). The very nature of the work done by many of our charities attracts supporters to the table who find repugnant the whole idea of being exclusive. Sometimes, well-meaning members of your organizational team feel compelled to open the event up to everyone in the name of democracy and inclusion and other such worthy motivations. Often what they wind up doing is screening out the very people you're hoping to attract - people with money to give your charity! **Remember if you want to prospect for donors, you need to invite people to your event who can afford to donate!***

**It's a lot of fun for the staff**

***This is true.** Just ask anyone who's done one. However, it's a huge amount of work before you even get to tournament day. The event itself is exhausting for staff and volunteers who rise at dawn and don't drag home till late that night, BUT at the same time, it can be so much fun that it takes days to get the cheesy grins off everybody's faces (especially if you made ten or twenty thousand bucks off the thing). A successful tournament is a great morale booster, but like any two-edged sword, it can also slice staff spirit to ribbons if things go badly. The ensuing faultfinding and recriminations can be devastating to behold.*

## WHAT HAVE WE GOT:

### **How Would I Describe My Organization's (Real Or Proposed) Golf Tournament?**

- ❑ **I have inherited an annual golf tournament that is either dead or dying**

*Feed it or shoot it! That's the decision you've got to make and no matter how long you've done it or how much you all enjoy it, if it's taking up more energy than it is worth, put an end to it. It may be difficult, but remember there's only one good reason to hold a benefit golf tournament.*

- ❑ **I have taken over a wildly successful golf tournament**

*This is a terrifying situation. You have to do well or you're liable to wind up an unemployed development director or unpopular board member - all the more reason to figure out how to keep injecting new life into the event. Don't be tempted to rest on your laurel. Laurels often have thorns in them.*

- ❑ **I've been approached by a golfer/board member who wants to have a "golf-tournament-to-raise-money".**

*This is actually a good thing if the person who approaches you actually wants to make money for your organization. Look for signs that the organizer is more interested in entertaining his company's clients or employees than in making real money for the charity. When the really hard work starts, notice whether your golf enthusiast's attention starts to wander. Consider bailing out if it does and you don't have a fall back supporter. Don't try to do it yourself with staff members. It's too risky and unless you're too late in the process, it's better to cancel or postpone the event till you can find better tournament leadership.*

- ❑ **I have been approached by a corporate type person who wants to host a "charity-golf-tournament-and-we're-looking-for-a-charity-to-benefit".**

*See the argument above. The same cautions apply.*

- ❑ **Someone (maybe not me) has decided that my organization "needs" to add a golf tournament to go along with a bunch of other special events we already host.**

*If you've already got multiple special events going, consider dropping the total down to two or less. Too many special events can overextend your staff and volunteers to the detriment of every event you're hosting. It's better to have one successful event than to have 10 that don't produce well. You'll wear out your volunteers.*

- ❑ **Someone in your organization ordered you to organize a tournament because your organization needs to make a lot of money quick to meet budget.**

*Golf tournaments aren't a quick way to make money and like all other special events, should never be relied upon to provide critical operating budget money or to cope with budget shortfalls.*

### **WHO IDEA WAS THIS ANYWAY: (Where did it come from)**

***From Inside** – If the idea comes from staff alone, don't do it. Staff need to be doing the work of the agency, not trying to drive special events as paid staff. It's almost always a bad idea to do a staff-driven tournament.*

***From Outside** – If this idea comes from a friend of the organization (a board member, volunteer, donor prospect, etc.), you have a better chance of success and you don't drain organizational resources. By outside, I don't mean that the idea comes from a professional fund-raiser that offers to take a cut of the profits. If donors find out that a portion of their donation is going to a hired gun professional fund-raiser, you'll lose a lot of credibility in the community. If you do hire professional organizers to help, that's okay, but make sure that board members or friends of your organization pay for their fees up front. Don't pay such fees from your operating funds or from profits from the event.*

**MADE ANY MONEY YET?** If you have completed a tournament, how much did it net after expenses?

*Once you've run the numbers ask yourself if you'd consider the payback a good return from an ordinary business. If you spent 1000 volunteer hours and cleared ) \$10,000 (that's net after expenses, not gross), then you've generated about \$10 an hour for your efforts. Considering most of the work was done by volunteers, that's a reasonable, if not lavish, return on your investment of time and energy. If you only cleared \$2,000 for the same amount of work, then you only made \$2 an hour for your labor and who would want to work for that. If you can't do any better than that, you need a different type of fund-raiser or major changes to this one!*

### **ANY OF THESE REASONS FOR A TOURNAMENT SOUND FAMILIAR?**

Which one of these best matches the reason you're having a tournament ...

- An organizational budget crisis
- Because you have always done one
- Because a golf tournament will make your organization look classy
- Someone else will do all the work for you (they promise)
- The board wants to make money quickly
- Everybody likes golf
- You want to build your organization's reputation
- To avoid basic fund-raising

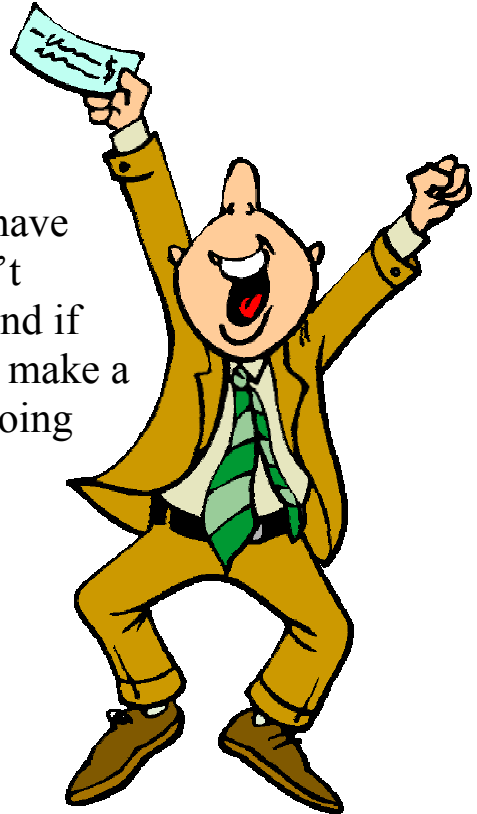
The list above contains only bad reasons for doing a golf tournament. The last reason is the absolute worst of all. There is only one reason for doing a golf tournament and it isn't one of these

**The only reason for doing a charity golf tournament is.....**

# **Drum roll please...**

## TO MAKE MONEY!!!!!!

**O**kay, the last one was a trick question, but the point is an important one. The **ONLY** valid reason to have a charity golf tournament is to make money for your charity and lots of it. If everybody understands that up front, if you have people who love your organization (and don't draw a paycheck from it) driving the effort and if you organize and execute well, then you can make a nice chunk of change and have a lot of fun doing it at the same time.



# Who's on the Team?

*(I aint doin' this by myself)*

Once you've made the decision to go forward with the event, and have a rough idea what sort of event the group has in mind, it's time to pull together the team that's going to make it all happen. First let's address a common problem with tournament committees – structure!



Successful tournaments can work well with both committee structures. If, however, you're a small to medium sized tournament, I always recommend the two committee approach. There are a lot of reasons why smaller committees work better, but the obvious is the application of the famed K.I.S.S. rule. The simpler you can keep it, the better. The same principles that govern small business, politics and the military also govern successful special events.

## Which Committee structure looks better to you?

- Eight committees**
  - Sponsorship committee
  - Media/public relations committee
  - Food & beverage committee
  - T-shirt committee
  - Registration committee
  - Volunteer committee
  - Goody bag committee
  - Silent auction committee
  
- Two Committees**
  - Sales committee
  - Event committee

Organizations with flat hierarchies tend to be more flexible, responsive and creative. The fewer layers of authority between the tournament director and the front line “worker bee” types, the better you’ll be able to manage what can be a very complex process. Unless your tournament director is an organizational genius who has lots of time and is brilliant at delegation, try to keep your committees few and closely connected to your core organizers.



## THE LEAN COMMITTEES APPROACH

### **The Sales Committee:**

- Team sales & registration
- Advertising
- Goody bags
- T-shirts
- Hole sponsors
- Silent auction items
- Food & beverage donations
- Raffle items
- Event sponsors

### **The Event Committee:**

- Program planning
- Contracts w/ suppliers
- Celebrities
- Golf courses
- Cleanup
- Volunteers
- Hole marshals
- Signage & placement
- Goody bag prep
- Hosting celebrities
- Acquisition of trophies
- Publicity
- Speakers
- Rental equipment
- Side Bar events
- Dinner/ lunch
- Food/beverage
- Liaison with course pro
- Paying bills
- Evaluation success

As you look at the two-committee model, you can see that each committee is responsible for a lot of different elements in the planning process. Each committee, however, focuses on elements that are inter-related. Simply put one group handles the money, the other handles the event itself.

**The sales committee handles all the financial planning and produces funds needed to make the tournament pay.** They are the hunter-gatherers – the folks who live on the phone, don't take no for an answer and love making money. They can't be shy. They have to be comfortable, not only asking for money, but should expect sponsors to pay up and not mind gently reminding them when they don't.

**The event committee members on the other hand are the hosting, nurturing types that will knock themselves out to make the tournament a pleasant event.** These folks thrive on making people happy. They want to see everything run smoothly. They excel at decorating, organizing, creating atmosphere, getting people what they want and making them want to come back next year. They never forget to say "Thanks" and if anyone is unhappy, these lovely people feel they have failed.

These groups represent two very different skills sets. Some tournament organizers will insist on making every task into a separate committee. It's tempting to think that by parsing the tasks out to a lot of little groups and "letting them run with it", you have a better chance of getting things done.

**The problem with that approach is that while some committees may do their work well, some, inevitably don't.** When you have a committee whose members fall down on the job (and you will), you can easily find yourself waking up on tournament day with big holes in your program where one committee didn't follow through.

**With a two-committee setup, your leaders can shift jobs that aren't getting done to stronger members within the committee if you have to prop up weaker members that may find they've bitten off more than they can chew when they volunteered to coordinate the raffle or find all the door prizes.** Since you've chosen committee members who all have similar skills and mindsets, you have a lot more flexibility within your committee and you avoid the political fallout that you would have had if that person's task was assigned to a separate "committee". Then you'd have had to basically relieve a "committee director" of her job or hurt her feelings by assigning someone from outside the committee to nursemaid her.

**People can be sensitive about titles you give them.** The fewer big titles you hand out, the fewer political land mines you face if you have to help out someone if a job is overwhelming. It doesn't hurt someone's feelings as much if a fellow committee member steps in to help. It avoids implied criticism of the job they're doing, since they're not the "chairman in charge" of a particular task. If you make it clear from the beginning that the whole committee is responsible for the whole job and make sure everybody does a bit of everything, you create an atmosphere of cooperation. Too many committee chairs creates a bloated bureaucracy that, trust me,

you do not want to have to deal with!

**By blending so many jobs within a single committee, it gives you far more flexibility and allows your committee members to interact in a way that creates synergy and can often generate new "out of the box" ideas.** A sales committee person, for instance, can also sell sponsorships and pick up a few door prizes or a hole sponsorship or whatever if he happens to run across a sponsor who wants to do something besides put up cash or buy a tee box sponsorship. A program committee person working primarily on coordinating lunch, might give you some ideas on crowd flow at the shotgun start that saves you a lot of confusion later. In this case, because this person has experience moving people at catered events, they might recognize a flaw in your program design for crowd flow in other areas being discussed by the whole committee.

Anytime you put a bunch of "money" people in a room they're going to generate a lot of creative ideas for making money. If you put a bunch of event producers, hostesses, and party planners in a room, then they're going to generate a lot of creative ideas for how to put on your event smoothly and successfully. If you put them all together, they're creating a wonderful kind of energy from which ideas generate. The trick then is to get all the right people together in the right place at the right time and create a safe place for them to start generating ideas willy-nilly! Next thing you know you've got a whole bunch of great ideas and everybody gets passionate about your event and you're off to the races.

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## **That said; let's look at personalities and how they impact committee assignments.**

### **THE “LOTSA COMMITTEES” APPROACH**

Teams Committee	Joe Goodoldboy, chairman
Advertising Committee	Ima Schill, chairman & owner of Schill Advertising
Public Relations Committee	Beverly Schmoover, chairman
Goody Bag Committee	Lucretia Scrounger, chairwoman
T-Shirt Committee	E. Wanna Freebie, chairperson
Volunteer Committee	June R. Leeger, chair
Silent Auction Committee	Evilyn Uppity, chairperson
Food & Beverage Committee	Jimbo Saucy, chair & owner of Jim's BBQ catering
Cleanup Committee	Izabit Late, chairman (when he finds out)
Hole Sponsor Committee	Ino Sumptin, chair
Raffle Committee	Anna Spin, chairwoman
Awards Dinner Committee	Weelie Stuckup, queen
Trophy Committee	“Bear” Lee Conshuss, chairman and trophy shop owner
Hole Marshal Committee	Debbie T. Sheriff, chairman & strongarm
Celebrity Host Committee	Alvin D. Chipmunk, chairman & football fan
Registration Committee	Oma Goodness, chairperson
The Committee of Public Safety	“Robes” Pierre, Enforcer

**The problem with a committee structure like that is that it appears that a lot is going on, when, in fact, relatively little revenue may be generated.** A handful of dedicated volunteers with some time on their hands is the secret to success. You do want to use all the folks listed above, but for heaven's sake, don't give each one a whole committee. Tournament organizers often divide golf tournament volunteers into lots of little committees like this right off the bat. If it's an experienced group, that's probably okay and lots of people do it that way, but if this is your first time out, I really believe you want to start more simply.

**When you look at the task committees face, there are really just the two basic groups in any special event. Everything else is a subset of one of these groups. These two key groups again are the sales force and the event staff.** Each of these groups requires different sets of talents. *The first committee you want to organize is the sales team.* These guys are arguably the most important group in your event. Avoid falling into the “If we build it, they will come.../Field of Dreams” mentality. Don't make the mistake of putting all your efforts into creating a really terrific event & neglect to sell sponsorships, tickets & advertising IN ADVANCE. If you don't, you can wind up with a beautiful golf tournament that loses big bucks. The sales people are your make or break group. You can always find people to “do” the event. That's the easy work. I know that will make some people mad, but it's true. The unsung heroes of special events are the people with no shame, iron wills and a telephone super-glued to their heads.

# The Sales Force

## **Three types of people you need & their characteristics.**

### **The first is your group leader - the Enforcer.**

You need a hard-nosed, Atilla the Hun type who will remorselessly drive the sponsorship committee, the ticket sellers and silent auction committee and squash any rebellion that arises. Make him (or her) your sales committee's chairman. Okay, maybe you don't exactly want a real Atilla, but do you want someone in there who knows how to delegate and to follow up to make sure the work gets done. This person is your sales committee task leader. He's probably not going to be a nurturer. Let your tournament committee chairman take care of soothing feelings and making sure everyone gets thanked. The Enforcer's job is to get the job done.

### **The second type of person to recruit to your sales force is the scavenger.**

You're looking for a team member that will hit the local business community like the Vandals hit Rome. These are the folks that get you all the great stuff donated so you don't have to pay for anything. They're going after goods and services, silent auction items and good bag junk. It is a thankless job. Don't forget to thank them. You don't need more than a couple of these volunteers.

### **The last (and arguably the most crucial volunteers to recruit) are the pure sales types.**

These are people who don't ask for "stuff". They ask for money. And they don't take "No" for an answer. They will be the ones to sell tickets, program advertising and big sponsorships. They stay on the trail of reluctant sponsors like a coon hound on a scent. They do not give up until they have a check in their hot little hands. Find them, recruit them as volunteers and take very good care of them.

**Find these three groups of people and you have your event paid for before tournament day. Neglect to find these folks FIRST and you may be paying for your event long after tournament day.**

# The Event Committee - The Staff

This group is made up of a delightful combination of society matrons, obsessive compulsives, left-wing Earth mothers, adults with ADHD, golf nuts, shy people and social climbers. It's not quite that extreme, but you'll recognize the types. Their jobs include everything else you can think of that puts your tournament together and makes it go.

## Here are 5 basic personality types you need in this committee:

### General Eisenhower

This consummate politician understands how to select subordinates who can get the job done and manage to keep these highly competitive individuals from killing each other. This person has to be single-mindedly focused on making the best event possible. The event is everything and this person keeps everyone's eye on the prize and nose to the grindstone while avoiding offending anyone.

### The Obsessive-Compulsive

This is the person who crosses the "t's" and dots the "i's" and makes sure nothing gets left out. You have to give this person permission to obsess over details while at the same time making sure they don't drive everyone else crazy. These guys will make sure everything gets done. They can also micro-manage the event into oblivion, so don't put them in charge. They are narrow focus people. Give them jobs where this intense ability to focus is a strength and not a weakness.

### The Mother Goddess

Bless their hearts, these folks are the ones that love everybody and can't stand to see anyone uncomfortable and unhappy. These folks make great hosts, helpers and beverage cart people. Give them permission to use their imaginations to make things nice. If they want to put out some flowers, consider trusting their instincts. Take them seriously. The little touches they come up with can certainly put the polish on your event and may mean the difference between a good event and a great one.

### The Hyperactive

These are your energy people. They often have short attention spans and drive the calmer, more sedate members of your team nuts. At the same time, they can work like mules and will be the first ones on the scene (if they don't get lost on the way to the course) and they'll be the last ones to stagger off the course at the end of the day. They make great errand runners. These guys can be sent to town to get stuff someone forgot and they'll do it and not really mind whether it's anyone's fault or not. (Don't send a compulsive on this kind of errand – they'll want to make sure someone gets punished for making a mistake). Things you don't want them to do are jobs that involve high levels of detail, sitting for extended periods or remembering things. Pile drinks in a golf cart and send them around to fill coolers.

## The Ham

These are the folks that are comfortable at the center of attention. Put them up front to make announcements (they'll always be loud enough). Let them meet and greet. Give them visible jobs to do and they'll make sure people know where to go and what to do next. Keep them away from the nurturing and compulsive types. Put them in charge of sending people to the nurturing and compulsive types at the registration table, volunteer table and silent auctions. Let them announce the winners, play carnival barker at the live auction, fire the starting gun, play the bagpipes while wearing a kilt and step dancing on the front lawn. They're always good for a few laughs.

The event staff are the most laid back group. This bunch just wants to have fun and they will be the ones to make sure that everybody else has fun. Just beware – there are a couple of things to watch out for.

- 1. Get a leader with a gift for organization.** Make sure this person knows how to delegate and can work well with others. The rest of the group will do a fine job putting the event together if they have good leadership.
- 2. Create a couple of honorary committees** with limited responsibilities for folks who want to be a part of the event, but aren't able to be of much real help. That way you don't have to offend anyone or trust them with an important job they might not be able to pull off.
- 3. Make sure you keep your long term volunteer group small.** You don't need lots of unwieldy committees so everyone will feel involved. You can do most of the work with a handful of volunteers at the planning stages. People, who want to be "involved" but don't have a lot of time for it, can be short term volunteers. You'll need lots of volunteers on tournament day. They will be one day, in and out and will feel a part of the event and you don't make them feel guilty for not showing up for the weekly committee meetings that went on for 6 months before the tournament.

## *So, where do you find all these people?*

**W**ell, you start with your core group who bring in people they know from previous attendees, donors or golf widows whose husbands play in your tournament. Beyond that, you can cruise the business and society pages in the paper, listen to local TV and radio news and keep up with local gossip. Try to find people who have a natural "hook up" with your cause. A banker with a Down's syndrome child might be a recruit for an organization that works with people with developmental disabilities. An obituary for a prominent local person who died with Alzheimer's might yield a list of survivors who would be interested in support for a seniors group.

Look at other special event programs, articles in the paper, professional associations, Junior League and civic clubs. How many people do you need? You need enough to do the job. That sounds flip, but you really don't want to have a lot of superfluous people that will get in the way. Stick with people you can count on to do what you need to do. Keep the core group lean and concentrate on finding talent. Invest your time and recruiting energy into assembling the sales group **FIRST!**

## Creating a Good Mix:

**Think about what are some other jobs and personalities you can think of that you'll need to enlist to get the ball rolling?** We'll get more into the duties of each committee head later. For now, we'll look at who we need to look for to fill all the slots and guarantee a successful tournament. Once you've determined your committee chairman, write up some job descriptions for each key job. Here's a sample like this one:

### **Job title:**

Publicity – Event Committee

### **Characteristics:**

Outgoing personality, well connected with local media, energetic, knowledge of advertising, news writing, maybe even works for a media outlet and can get you “in” with a media sponsor. Able to wheedle freebie publicity. Knows when to pay for it.

This exercise will help you put the right people in the right places. Writing your own job descriptions is well worth the effort. It forces you to be aware of every job that needs doing and helps you not to forget to assign someone to do it. It can even jog your memory and suggest people you might want to recruit onto your team that you hadn't thought to invite.

Some personality types are essential to the healthy working of your team. As we said before, every team needs a good obsessive compulsive on the event staff and they make great scavengers. They do both jobs quite well in my experience. They'll also micro-manage your tournament into the ground if you don't balance your team with “big picture” people as well. As my grandmother used to say, “It takes all kinds.”

If you deal up front with the fact that people on the team have different talents and you create an atmosphere on your committee where it's okay that people have different styles, you're team will work far more efficiently. Don't let some team members make a virtue out of being “picky” so that they drive everyone crazy and slow down progress to a crawl. At the same time find a way to use a person's perfectionism in a way that makes them happy and allows their flair for detail to enhance the quality of your event. Don't let members make a character flaw out of someone's being forgetful of details. Just be sure that you put everyone in the right job. Put the obsessive in charge of the details and the scatter-brained “jolly good fellow” out there wooing sponsors and selling your advertising. Be sure you have someone check his paperwork, but make it okay for that to happen and don't let the compulsives crucify him for a missing jot or tittle on a form.

Be quick to point out the strengths of any team member that becomes the target of criticism and rally the team members to his or her support. You choose each team member for a specific reason. Be able to articulate that reason to the rest of the team because as the task of putting together the tournament becomes the behemoth it can be, you WILL have rebellions and personality conflicts arise. Dealing with conflict and minimizing the damage to the team is a key leadership function and the right person in that leadership role is crucial to the success of your team.

Be able to say, “You know, he may not be very careful with his reports, but he brought in three one thousand dollar sponsors last year.” Then ask the critic, “Would you kind of gently remind him about the paperwork? He means well, but he gets so busy schmoozing sponsors, sometimes he

forgets.” Remind them that this guy has lots of gall, something that a lot of us don’t have and that since WE don’t want to be the sales people, it’s not so bad having to bird dog his paperwork is it?

## **Every group has 2 types of leaders.**

### **The task leader.**

Remember the Enforcer—he or she is the one that keeps everybody on the job, squashes rebellion and enforces rules. The task leader makes sure the job gets done no matter what. This person is essential, but not adequate alone.

### **The socio-metric leader.**

This dear soul is adept at feeding egos, soothing hurt feelings and patting people on the back. The socio-metric leader makes people feel good about the project. Their attentions help keep up the enthusiasm of the team. They are the salve that heals the marks of the task leader’s whip.

**Occasionally you get a rare individual who is both types in one body, but these people are rare and precious.** Usually you find them in command of starships or small island nations during world wars. They often thrive on these kinds of projects, but don’t bet on finding one who has the time for it. If you as development person are going to be thrust into a leadership role, figure out which type of leader you are and find a tournament chair who is your opposite number.

At the very least, gauge the chair you’ve got. Figure out if he or she is a task or socio-metric leader. Whichever type your chairperson is, you will have to become the other type if you can. If he or she is a whip cracker, you become the nurturer. If the

chairperson can’t bear to hurt anyone’s feelings and just loves and appreciates everybody, you will need to bird dog deadlines, push volunteers to complete tasks and keep the committee moving along by sheer force of will!

Okay, to be sure it’s not all that cut and dried. Stereo-types help only so long as you realize they are stereotypes. As your committee grows, consciously look for the types of people you need. Make notes. If you see you’ve got lots of “event staff” people and not very many “sales” people, you have to go do some recruiting or you’ll be in trouble. And always make sure you’ve got some nice compulsive-types who’ll keep the process orderly and let them do it.

## **Volunteer Fatigue:**

Then, of course, there is the fatigue factor among your volunteers. Often they start out full of fire. Then, they figure out just how much work this thing really is and they fade in the backstretch. Charity Golf Tournaments, especially annual ones, can easily become staff-driven events instead of volunteer-driven simply because they worked their volunteers to exhaustion.

If you don’t have an active board of directors that gets behind the event, the volunteer crew starts to wonder why they’re doing all the work if the board members of the organization aren’t even going to bother to show up. This often happens when the event is several years old. The board grows tired of all the work that goes with it, especially if your organization doesn’t rotate its board members pretty regularly.



It becomes easy for them to decide, “Well, we’ve done our part now. We’ve gotten it off to a good start.” And so, having done the “hard part”, they decide they can dump the work off on the development staff. (What do you get paid for anyway, if not to run the fund-raisers?)

You may even be tempted to fall for that argument and take over the job for them. **BUT DON'T!!!!** A staff-driven tournament is a nightmare that can suck horrendous amounts of staff time from your organization that would better be spent in raising real money by soliciting donors in the case of your development. Even worse is when program staff get sucked in and they wind up working fund-raisers instead of actually running the programs that are supposed to be what you're all about anyway.

**One way to combat volunteer fatigue is to recruit new volunteers, train them over several years and move new blood into the chairman's seat pretty regularly.** Volunteer boredom will surely kill you, so don't get cocky and go resting on your past accomplishments. Golf tournaments can (gasp) actually lose money! Making money with a tournament is not a sure thing and requires the same kind of effort and energy any business venture would demand. Like any business venture, having good help is an essential element of any successful fund-raising event. **Finally, remember to make sure everyone has fun – including your volunteers.** You don't just want the golfers to come back. You want your helpers to come back too. Remember to thank your volunteers just like you do your sponsors, golfers and donors.

## Computerizing the Process

Handling the finances well is critical to the success of any charitable event. Always treat fund-raisers as you would treat any business venture. This seems obvious, but a whole bunch of us touchy-feely human services types haven't a clue as to how to properly manage our own finances, much less those of a project as complex as a charity golf tournament. If you aren't a bookkeeper by trade or by nature, my advice is, give the job to someone who is!

### FUND-RAISING SOFTWARE:

There are several fund-raising software packages that do a great job of tracking the money from fund-raising events. Any nonprofit organization worth its salt already has some sort of fund-raising software to track donors, fund-raising campaigns and special events. If you haven't got fund-raising software, GET IT! Do a Google Search for fund-raising software and you'll get a ton of pricey solutions for tracking your fund-raising efforts.

Once you get a fund-raising software package, the best way to use it is to give the responsibility for setting up and using the fund-raising software to a development or business department staffer with a penchant for putting little numbers in little boxes and making them all add up correctly. Learn how the software works and make sure you supply all the data you can so it can generate accurate and complete reports. Even if all you do is carry sacks of receipts to this person who will nag you mercilessly throughout the course of the tournament, you will not regret it. They will produce lovely monthly (even weekly if you need it) financial reports throughout the course of the tournament that will make your tournament committee giddy with delight and make you look professional, competent and in charge.

My favorite low cost solution to simple fund-raising is to The FundRaiser Family of Donor Management software consisting of three fund raising programs for the Windows environment:

- FundRaiser Basic
- FundRaiser Jr
- FundRaiser Professional®

FundRaiser Basic starts at a miniscule \$89 and goes all the way up to the big league professional versions that cost thousands and can tell you what color underwear the chairman of the Junior League wears. Well that may be an exaggeration, but if you found out what color that was, there would be a place in the software to put the information for whatever reason you might want to preserve that tantalizing bit of data. The software can be found at <http://www.fundraisersoftware.com/> on the Internet. They even have an on-line fund-raising class that allows folks to share their expertise and ideas on how to raise money. It's fun and gives you amazing access to some powerful fund-raising consultants who hang out on the list.

For a small nonprofit the Basic version does everything you need and you don't have to go to South Carolina for a week to learn how to use it. It's a nice bit of software to support your fund-raising efforts and I highly recommend them (and they're not paying me for an endorsement either).

### **BEYOND FINANCIAL RECORD KEEPING:**

There have been several notable attempts at creating tracking software for golf tournaments in the past few years. Most that I have seen have been overly focused on gigantic pro tournaments with extensive programming to determine handicaps and all of the complex stuff that goes with a PGA class tournament.

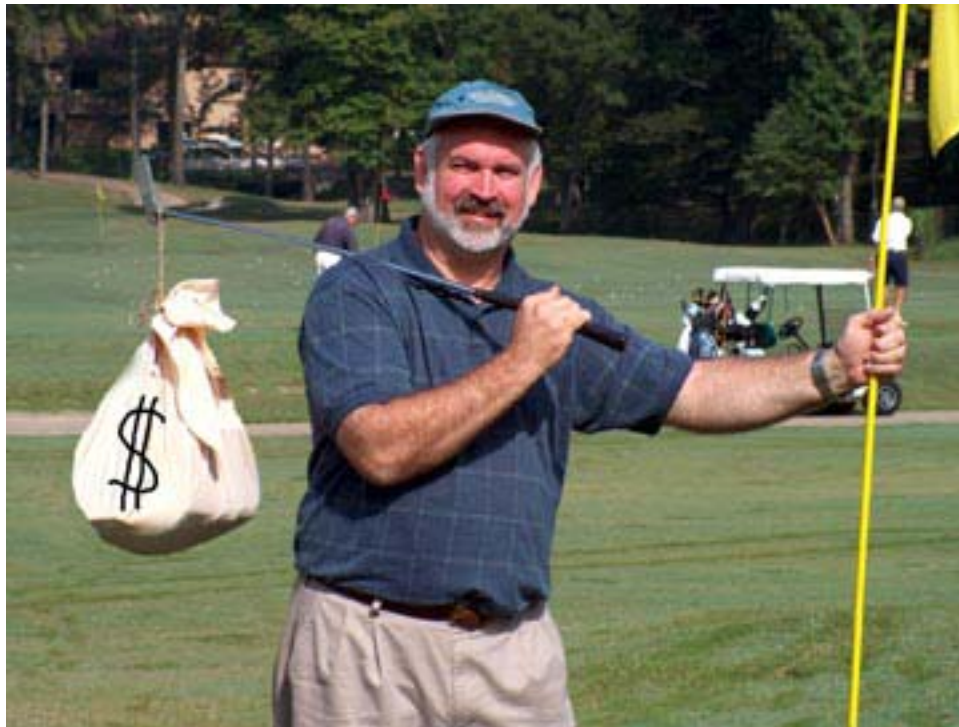
Let's face it, most of us will NEVER do that sort of tournament. I have, however, come across a resource that I fell in love with immediately. Check out an outfit that operates a website at <http://www.golfreg.com>. Golfregistrations.com's Golf TMS is a complete suite of software that helps you manage your golf tournament in a way a lot of us only dreamed about. Golfregistrations.com offers an on-line software package that, not only lets you track committees, sponsors and donations, but also helps you create a professional, full-featured online golf tournament website, with the ability to do on-line registration and make secure payments via the Internet. And it really only takes a few minutes to get things up and running.

Golf TMS gives you the ability to manage the full event life cycle from pre-event promotions, to gathering company logos, sponsors logos, displaying course pictures and maps on your own tournament website. I did a dummy one just fooling around the first time I tried the free trial and it looked great! And you don't have to be a computer whiz either. The web-based software is purchased for a finite period of time. If you use it next year, you just re-up and pay the fee again. It's very reasonable, though, and you don't have to worry about updates, keeping a server healthy and alive or fooling with paying a web page designer (or worse waiting for a volunteer to fix you up). You can use your website to sell and promote sponsorships online. You can set up to accept Visa & Mastercard or even Paypal through your site. It creates all your online and

## Getting Your Charity Golf Tournament Started Right

downloadable reports, lets you manage teams, even assign golfers to teams and post them for everyone to see. You can list your auction & raffle items online too. The site is available all year long and can be renewed for next year's tournament. If you have a webpage for your organization you can link the two pages. It even links automatically to Mapquest so golfers can print out a map.

Eric Tracy, California's famed Mulligan Man, raves about Golfreg.com calling it "...*the most innovative new tool in decades to help charity tournaments register their golfers online.*" I absolutely agree. I wouldn't go anywhere else. I haven't found anything else that works as well. I just love the website feature. It lets you instantly update your news section. You could conceivably post your leaderboard on your site during the tournament and update it throughout the tournament on the web. There are all sorts of neat things you can do and the cost is really low considering what you get. And, as Forest Gump put it so eloquently, "That's all I've got to say about that."



For more information about running successful golf tournaments and golf-based events, check out "*Charity Golf Tournaments: A Survivor's Notebook*", by Tom King (available in paperback or Ebook format at [www.golfreg.com](http://www.golfreg.com) or in paperback at [www.charitygolftournament.net](http://www.charitygolftournament.net)).