“The Golf Country Club”* Leverages VCT’s ePublishing Managed Service to Accelerate Member Activation, Increase Member Spending, and Decrease Communication Fees

The Challenges:

In planning for the 2009 season, the club leadership determined that increased member activation and the revenue growth that would come from a more active and involved membership should be a club priority.

As part of its research, the club determined that it had been spending in excess of $3,000 per month on print newsletters. This format was not only expensive, but it had become extremely time consuming for busy club staff. The addition of occasional email blasts from the club’s website resulted in members feeling inundated with information, which was often repetitive and, in many cases, irrelevant.

The Golf Country Club determined that it needed a better way to improve and expand its ability to communicate to the club membership in a cost-effective and visually appealing manner, in order to achieve its goal for member activity growth. Club leadership desired a communication stream that could be delivered on a consistent and timely basis, which would also reinforce the following important message: “Our club is the best, and here’s another example why.”

The Solution:

Given the priorities for 2009, The Golf Country Club was prepared to seek out and evaluate the appropriate ePublishing solution and partner. Following a 30-day review of alternatives, the club chose VCT’s LoyaltyBuilder ePublishing managed service to enable the delivery of a professional-looking weekly eNewsletter to support increased member activation and drive revenues and growth. Through this new medium, club communication immediately became more personalized and relevant, incorporating more diverse and engaging content.

To emphasize the club’s commitment to excellence in member services and to make the smooth transition from a print newsletter to an electronic version, VCT designed a club-customized template that utilized bold imagery, delivered consistent brand messaging, and gave members access to all relevant club information with the click of a button.

The Golf Country Club was able to take advantage of VCT’s fully managed service solution. This included graphics creation, content management and publishing, database management, plus tracking and reporting for each issue on a cumulative basis (over multiple issues).

LoyaltyBuilder’s tracking reports enabled The Golf Country Club to better understand what types of content recipients are most interested in. Having this information allowed club staff, in conjunction with VCT, to create customized programs which increased member financial support and involvement.

In addition, the ePublication served an important role in the club’s marketing efforts as the newsletters were forwarded to prospective members to illustrate the variety of events and amenities available at the club.

Results:

The Golf Country Club is now able to seamlessly communicate its extensive value proposition to its audience (members and prospects), keeping them active and involved. Members see the eNewsletter as a trusted source of information and insight into the happenings at their club and anticipate receiving it each week. On occasion, when the club has skipped a week of sending out the eNewsletter, club staff has received numerous calls from members asking “where is it?”

It is not surprising then, that, on average, eNewsletter Open Rates have steadily remained around or above 50%—nearly 100% higher than the Open Rates from the former website email blasts.

The club also reported an upswing in member attendance and facility usage to the point where Food and Beverage revenue exceeded budget for the first time in the club’s 17-year history, with increased sales of over 15%. Events were consistently sold out.

Overview

Service
VCT’s Fully Managed LoyaltyBuilder™ ePublishing Service

Client Profile
The Golf Country Club is a distinguished suburban private club with 700 plus members, located in the Midwest and is ranked among the top 100 clubs in the nation. The club has consistently been recognized for its commitment to excellence in member services, governance, amenities, and tradition.

Business Goals
The Golf Country Club sought to increase member activation and revenue growth through a new eCommunication tool that would ultimately improve the club’s ability to communicate to its membership base in a cost-effective manner.

Solution
The club chose VCT’s LoyaltyBuilder ePublishing managed service to enable the delivery of a professional-looking weekly eNewsletter with tracking ability and more personalized and relevant content to support increased member activation and to drive revenues and growth.

Results
Increased open and Click-Through Rates illustrate The Golf Country Club’s ability to better communicate its extensive value proposition to its audience (members and prospects), keeping them active and involved. Together, these increases have significantly impacted awareness amongst the membership, and the positive implications on revenues can be seen across all profit centers.
throughout the 2009 season, thus increasing event revenues by nearly 10% from the previous year.

It is now possible to make ongoing adjustments based on member interests and feedback. The more open stream of communication has increased member feedback to the club and has led to new ideas for club social events and activities.

On average, eNewsletter Click-Through Rates were almost 25% for the 2009 calendar year—nearly 300% higher than the Click-Through Rates from the former website email blasts. Together, these increases have significantly impacted awareness amongst the membership, and the positive implications on revenues can be seen across all profit centers.

By eliminating the print version of the club’s newsletter, the club has saved on average $2,000 per month—this has translated to a 60-day payback on the total upfront LoyaltyBuilder implementation fees invested in the ePublishing initiative, and an ongoing 100% ROI each month thereafter (on print savings alone).

Current club membership is now at maximum capacity, and the result is an active waiting list of new members.

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**Quotes**

"The LoyaltyBuilder eNewsletter Service is one of the most strategic and beneficial communication tools I have experienced. Cost effective and visually appealing, this tool not only stands by its service, it truly delivers."

- General Manager  
The Golf Country Club

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**Investment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Setup</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>12-Month Investment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LoyaltyBuilder™</td>
<td>$4000</td>
<td>$1,600</td>
<td>$23,200</td>
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<td>Managed Services</td>
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</table>

**Return**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Upfront</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>12-Month Return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in Print Costs</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
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<td>$16,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased Facility Revenues</td>
<td>$925 avg.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$11,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage, Green Fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Events Booking, Pro Shop, Promotional sales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Member (Via &quot;Forward to a Friend&quot;)</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$750</td>
<td>$29,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(48 Referrals resulted in 2 new member)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Return</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$56,900</strong></td>
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* Due to the detailed nature of this case study, the club’s name will remain anonymous and will be replaced with “The Golf Country Club”