

# The Golf Outing Planner's Blueprint

*Systematically work your way to bigger profits and  
more fun*

**Presented by:**



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## INTRO

You have decided or have been "Volun-told" to run this year's golf outing. For some, this is an exciting process; for other's it strikes fear in their hearts. Thankfully, the Golf Outing Planner's Blueprint will guide you to a successful event.

### **The Blueprint will show you how to:**

*Systematically raise significant money for your cause*

*Ensure that your event is enjoyable and your participants want to play in it again next year*

*Allow you to rest assured that you have all the bases covered; so much in fact that you might even be able to relax and play in the event if you should desire!*

## BUDGETING

There are a lot of details to go over so let's get started. Most outings or fundraisers main objective is to raise money. This means you need to budget for expenses and set your outing up to have multiple streams of revenue.

The following are the expenses you can expect to incur as well as revenue generating ideas:

### **EXPENSES**

*Green Fees & Carts*

*Food & Beverage*

*Trophies/Contest Prizes*

#### ***Optional:***

*Non-donated raffle prizes*

*Printed materials – program, postage, signs etc.*

*Photographer*

### **REVENUE\***

*Golfers*



*Hole Sponsors  
Event Underwriter  
Mulligans  
Raffle*

**REVENUE CONT.**

*Auction  
Gambling Holes  
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*\*See the "Show Me the Money"  
details*



*section for more*

## **COURSE AND DATE SELECTION**

In the Grand Rapids area alone there are 36 golf courses, 28 of which are open to the public! Most all of them will promise great service and a great product. However, some definitely rise to the top in terms of what they offer and promise.

When choosing a course, location is obviously very important. Is it accessible for the folks playing in your event? How about the course itself? Sometimes a course is surrounded by homes which can take away from the enjoyment and intimacy of your event. Is the course situated on a scenic piece of property or is it lined with busy streets and highways?

Course layout is also important to consider. Is the course difficult? Is it considered an easy course? This is when you need to have an understanding of what kind of golfers your group consists of. You certainly would not choose a championship style course if everyone in your group only plays 1-2 times a year. Just as you would not want to choose a difficult course you certainly would not want to choose a course that your group would be bored with as being too easy. Most outings have a blend of avid golfers and novice golfers. Therefore a nice blend of difficulty and player friendliness should be the goal when choosing a course.

Other crucial factors that need to be considered are as follow.

## **FOOD & COST**

Most every outing has some type of food for their golfers. Most outings will offer food at the conclusion of the golf portion of the outing. However, many outings will offer a continental breakfast or lunch prior to tee off. Most golf courses can put a package together for food and golf combined, usually based on time of year, time of tee off and number of golfers. Prices are usually determined on a per golfer basis.

## **ALCOHOL SERVICE**

If your group is interested in beer, wine and or liquor be sure to check if the course you are dealing with

has a license to serve alcohol. Most will have a beer and wine license while others also offer liquor. If the course offers alcohol it is illegal for anyone to bring any alcohol onto the premise that is not purchased from the course.

## RAIN/WEATHER POLICY

When dealing with events that take place outdoors, the weather is always the great wildcard. As an organizer it is normal to fret about the weather. One thing to keep in mind is that the participants have been looking forward to and have been planning on participating in your event for a long time. A little rain or inclement weather is not going to deter most people. Rain or shine plan on your event going as scheduled.

There are times when Mother Nature just does not cooperate or strikes with fury and puts participants in danger. That would be one of two reasons to cancel due to weather. The other would be if the course becomes too wet to be playable. Be sure to check with the course about their weather policy in the event you do have to cancel. or reschedule.

## CANCELLATION POLICY

Sometimes even the best laid plans do not come to fruition. If that should happen with your event be sure to be open and honest with the course in a timely manner. If you promised the course a full field and one week away from the outing you only have four teams signed up you need to make sure the course is aware. The course is turning away tee times expecting the course to be filled by your group. Most course operators will work with you as your success helps them succeed. Is this your first outing and you don't really know how many to expect? Maybe you have you done this for 25 years and you know you will have 144 golfers; just as you did the previous quarter of a century. Good communication is always the best policy.

## DRESS CODE

Be sure to understand the culture and dress code of the course you are selecting. If it is an upper end course, blue jeans and non-collared shirts are going to be frowned upon. In some cases patrons not adhering to the dress code will be asked to leave the property. You want your participants to be comfortable and enjoy themselves. If the course is too rigid or lax for your group you need to take that into consideration.

## FINAL DETAILS

Many courses request some form of payment or deposit to reserve your date. Again, the course operator can work with you on this issue depending on your situation.

### THESE ITEMS ARE THE APPROVED EXETER GOLF CLUB CLOTHING FOR MEN AND WOMEN



## CHOOSING A DATE

In Michigan any given year provides us with 6-8 months of golf weather. Some things need to be considered when choosing a date. The first thing is the realization that no matter what date you choose, the date will not work for everyone. People are busier than ever and the likelihood of everyone being available is highly unlikely. A date should be chosen that will not conflict with the majority of your potential participants. For example, if your event was for an Alumni Association you would be best served not to plan the outing on Homecoming Weekend of their Alma Mater.

**INSIDER TIP:** *If you choose a fall outing be sure to ask about the courses aerating schedule for their greens. Aerating is a maintenance practice that involves poking holes in the greens to stimulate turf growth. As you can imagine this practice makes putting even more of a challenge. This is a necessary practice for courses and can be weather dependent so they might not be able to give you a precise date but they should have a rough idea if your event has the potential to be impacted.*

## SIGNAGE AND PRINTED MATERIAL

The budget is set, the course and date have been selected now all you need are golfers and sponsors! Here is a list of items you may need to get the word out:

### PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

- Registration form
- Save the date postcard
- Letters seeking sponsorship if applicable
- Sponsor banner
- hole
- Hole signage



### REGISTRATION FORM

The registration form should ask for a **minimum** of a one person deposit for the outing and the name of the players on each team. This allows you to keep the cash flow coming in and help pay expenses. Optimally you would get the whole team to pay up front. You dramatically decrease your no shows by getting a deposit from the participants. You are also going to be that much more organized the day of the event if eliminate collecting registration fees out of your equation the day of the event.

The registration form should also ask for both a physical and email address. This allows you to stay in communication with your golfers as the event approaches it also comes in handy when promoting next year's event.

**INSIDER TIP:** *On the registration form provide a checkbox for participants that allows them to opt in to the hosting course's email marketing program. If they opt in, the savvy golf course operator would love that information. See if you can get an extra door prize or pro shop credit in return for some of your golfers contact information that the course can use for promotional purposes. THIS ONLY APPLIES IF THEY OPT IN ON THE REGISTRATION FORM.*

## SAVE THE DATE POSTCARD

The save the date postcard is often times the first time someone hears about the outing. Depending who you are planning on soliciting to play in the outing this might not be necessary. If it is it should mention time, date and course. It would not hurt to mention that you are looking for golfers, sponsors and volunteers. Tell them how they can sign up for either.



## SPONSORSHIP LETTERS

Sponsorship letters should mention all the ways it is possible to get involved in your outing sponsorship -wise. You can solicit hole sponsors, a major sponsor who will underwrite the event for a fee. Many times outing coordinators will package different options for sponsors to get involved. It may include just sponsorship or it might include a team's entry fee. The possibilities are endless.

## SPONSOR SIGNAGE

If you sold hole sponsors these need to obviously be put out at the appropriate hole that it can be seen easily. If you have donors other than hole sponsors a banner recognizing them should be displayed prominently.

## EVENT SHEET/PROGRAM or WELCOME LETTER

This outlines the day's events and gets all of your golfers on the same page. It should mention the format, what tees are being used, rules and event holes. This is also another opportunity to thank your sponsors.

## VOLUNTEERS

You are going to want to solicit help for your outing. You are going to need help leading up to the day of the event as well as on the day of your event. There are plenty of tasks that are going to require help.



## **REGISTRATION**

It's good to have two – three volunteers on hand to register golfers, accept money, and hand out event sheets. At the time of registration it's the perfect time to offer golfers the opportunity to purchase mulligans, raffle tickets or entry in an optional skins game.

## **MISC PRE-GOLF TASKS**

Depending on what you plan on offering at your outing you might need additional volunteers to stuff goodie bags, or pass out appreciation gifts (tees, balls, etc.) as golfers register.

## **TASKS DURING GOLF**

Most likely volunteers will be busiest at the start of the outing and toward the end. The exception being anyone involved with on course contests or if you have someone taking photos. It's important to keep in mind that there will be a stretch of 3-4 hours where not much help is needed. You should prepare accordingly. If you have a raffle the best thing to do is draw the numbers at this time and notify the golfers that numbers have already been drawn and they can pick up their prize. If you have a lot of prizes, no one wants to sit through number after number being drawn after a long day on the course.

## **ON COURSE CONTESTS**

Some contests require witnesses, especially if you are going to give away a substantial prize. If you are going to have a betting hole, that will require a volunteer to handle money and wagers. Be sure to provide startup money so they can make change.

## **POST GOLF TASKS**

If food is being served it should be ready to go as the golfers come off the course. It's been a long day and they are hungry. You do not want hungry golfers waiting around to be fed. A good rule of thumb is to open the food service up when about two-thirds of the golfers are done. If food is opened too early, the first groups through will be done well before some of the golfers are even off the course. The goal is to keep things moving and keep people around for the completion of all of the festivities you have planned. Volunteers can make sure the food is ready to go or communicate with the golf course staff. Scorecards can be collected and turned in to make sure scoring is being done in a prompt fashion. Another task is to make sure all of the prizes and awards are organized for maximum efficiency.

## **AWARDS, PRIZES AND WRAP UP**

Once again, this can't be stressed enough; wrap your outing up in a concise and efficient manner. The wrap up should include awarding prizes, announcing the close of the silent auction if applicable and thank the golfers and sponsors for their participation. This should be accomplished in 10-15 minutes max, anything longer than you are just being tuned out.

## **FINAL DETAILS**

- Determine the amount raised
- Recap with your committee – what worked, what didn't, were you happy with the course?

- Send thank you notes to all involved – golfers, sponsors, volunteers and the golf course

The finish line is near. A few last details and it's a wrap. Catch your breath - next year's outing is not far off!

## **SHOW ME THE MONEY!**

There are numerous ways you can generate additional revenue. Use your imagination and have fun with it. Here are a few tried and true ideas that are pretty standard at many outings. If you are planning on any on course games or events ask the course for their suggestion on which holes would be the best fit.

### **HOLE SPONSORS**

There is a lot of money to be made in hole sponsorships. It works by getting a company to sponsor a hole. In return the company gets recognized with signage on a hole. You can also sell sponsorships for the beverage cart, driving range or practice green. If you are able to get more than one sponsorship for a hole; display one at the tee box and one by the green.



### **CORPORATE SPONSORS**

A corporate sponsor or sponsors can underwrite a portion of the event. Be sure to recognize them with name recognition on printed materials and signage. It's always a nice touch to specifically highlight a specific portion of the event that is funded by a sponsorship. For instance, dinner sponsored by Company X or Hole-in-one contest sponsored by Company XYZ.

### **MULLIGANS, STRINGS AND MULLIGAN SURVIVAL KIT**

A great way to raise money at a golf outing is to offer mulligans. A mulligan is simply the opportunity to take an extra shot for \$5. You can also sell 4-5 feet of string and the golfer can use the string to get that distance closer to the hole. These are pure profit. Taking these ideas a step further, sell a Mulligan Survival Kit that includes a traditional mulligan, the string, a "foot wedge" where you get to kick the ball to improve your "lie", and a toss where you get to toss the ball to improve your lie. This can be sold for \$20 and is pure profit!

### **SKINS**

A skins game offers golfers the opportunity to buy in (usually \$20 per four person team) and compete against the rest of the field who opted to get into the skins game. The team with the lowest score on a hole with no ties wins that hole. More than likely there will be more than one winner. Because this is a charity event, you most likely will not be giving away a lot of high priced prizes. A skins game is perfect to keep the more competitive golfers in your group interested. You can decide to take a portion of the skin money to go to the charity or have a 100% payback to the golfers.

**INSIDER TIP:** *Some golf organizers are leery of a skins game in fear that it will take away from the pool of potential money golfers will want to donate or spend on fundraising. This is where mulligans and the mulligan survival kit pay off. Any golfer who enters in the skin game would be at a competitive disadvantage not to purchase mulligans as well.*

## **RAFFLE TICKETS**

One of the most tried and true money raising techniques is selling raffle tickets. Make sure your prizes are on display so golfers know what they have a chance at.

## **GAMBLING HOLE**

Choose a par 3 and have the course draw an 8-10-foot circle around the hole. Golfers can wager \$5, \$10, \$20 or whatever you decide. If they land safely in the circle, they double their money if not, the charity keeps their money.

## **SILENT AUCTION**

Items are displayed at check in and around the clubhouse before, during and after the golf portion of the event. Individuals can write down their bid and if they are the highest bidder when the auction closes, they “win” that item. Be sure to set a minimum bid that is not too high to get more people involved in the bidding.

## **PRO SHOT**

Another wagering opportunity, this time against a golf pro. The golfer can wager a set amount of money that they can hit the ball further and straighter than the pro. If he or she can they double their money; if not the charity keeps their money. Another wrinkle on this would be to pay the pro to hit your shot for you.

## **PUTTING CONTEST**

This is a good event to have before and after the event. It’s an opportunity to keep golfers occupied as they wait for the event to start or while waiting for the rest of the golfers to finish. Charge the golfers an amount for 3 balls to putt. Anyone who makes one putt goes to the final round. Whoever wins the final round gets a prize!

## **CONCLUSION**

With a little planning and organization, you will be amazed at the success you can have planning and organizing a golf outing. It does not take a great golfer to be a great organizer of outings. As a matter of fact, most outing organizers don’t even golf. After reading the Golf Outing Planner’s Blueprint you can be confident you have all the bases covered and you’re ready for success.

