



2017 NGF Symposium Content Summary

Why Does the Media Care So Much About Golf?

The NGF reports on the State of the Industry – to the industry. But for Americans who don't work in golf, perception of our business is shaped by the press. Too many published articles accentuate the negative, putting everyone from CEOs to golf course superintendents on the defensive. Is the volume of press dedicated to golf actually a plus? Would we be more concerned if the press was indifferent toward the game? With record numbers of people expressing interest in playing golf, it doesn't appear that negative coverage has a damaging effect on desire to play, but are there other impacts? The narrative forces us to answer uncomfortable questions, and we've assembled an expert panel to help you answer them. Our guests will discuss why golf is such a compelling target, why the narrative skews so negative, and how we might respond.

State of the Industry (SOI) – How Participation is Evolving

The NGF's SOI is grounded in key metrics and trends – not click-bait headlines and sound bites. Despite those who would argue otherwise, there are more positive than negative golf business indicators right now. As in previous years, NGF will share its perspective on the state of the game, and the trends that are affecting the business today. The audience will get a first look at new measures of golf engagement that go beyond the number of people who play on a golf course.

The Congregation of Golf – What Golf Can Learn from the Church of England

Reverend Richard Lloyd is the reigning Champion Golfer of the Church of England. He's also helped turn around a once-failing church outside London, growing the congregation from 30 to over 200 in the past five years. When you stop to think about it, golf and traditional denominational churches share some striking similarities: both have an aging customer base and cling to many seemingly essential customs and traditions. Young people still find their way into the fold, but not necessarily in the numbers they once did. Consolidation of facilities is occurring because supply outstrips demand. Reverend Lloyd will share his thoughts about what golf can learn from what's happening in organized religion, why young people are flocking to non-denominational churches, and how traditional churches are responding and to what effect?

It's All About Priorities – Where Does Golf Stand and How Can We Affect It?

Rich Luker, Ph.D. is a leading social scientist (Luker on Trends), researcher and speaker who has been operating for 30+ years at the intersection of sports fandom, participation and evolving behavior. Luker founded the ESPN Sports Poll in 1994 to deeply study America's engagement with sports. Luker will share his insights on the paradigm shifts in behavior that determine how free time is spent. How well is golf positioned based on changing priorities? What can golf learn from other sports about building the type of loyalty and community that profoundly impacts engagement?

Youth & Golf: Exposure – Perceptions – Possibilities

NGF has undertaken the most comprehensive youth golf study ever. During March of 2017, initial surveys were completed by more than 2,500 households covering 4,000 children, including at least 200 for each year of age from 6-to-17. We know how many juniors “play on a course” in a given year – but how many of the 50 million 6-17 year olds in the U.S. have we actually reached? What impression have we made? How does golf stack up against other sports and activities that compete for time and attention? The Symposium audience will hear the preliminary results and learn more about the full report to come later this year.

ACE Talks – Ideas Worth Sharing

If you’ve not watched a TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) talk on YouTube, you’ve missed out on some terrific insights. TED talks are short, focused presentations where speakers share their views on how to change the world (at least the world in which they operate). At this year’s Symposium, the NGF is introducing ACE Talks (Advocacy, Change and Engagement). ACE talks will inform, inspire and entertain. The Symposium will feature several engaging ACE speakers:

Jason Harris (Owner, Orr Lake Golf Club, Ontario): **Co-opetition**

> *How one golf course created thousands of golfers (Hint: It didn't)*

Jay Karen (Chief Executive Officer, NGCOA): **No Reward Without Risk**

> *We’ve got to help golf course owners act like entrepreneurs*

Del Ratcliffe, PGA (Owner, Ratcliffe Golf Services): **Selling Golf**

> *The secret to growing the game is a secret*