

# Cheap Chippers & Divot Devotees

Mix & Match Your Way To Higher Golf Commissions

By Steve Crowhurst

So Mikey called me. “Guess where I’m going?” He said. “Home?” I replied. “No, Scotland – I’m going golfing in Scotland!” This boy was excited. Heading to golf Mecca he was. Mikey continued, “I’m going with four other guys to play on the Isle of Islay.” “Where’s that?” I asked. “I don’t know, *Scotland*...one of the other guys has it all arranged.” I tell ya, golf and Mikey they are linked for sure. “We’re staying at the Machrie Hotel.” I went online as we chatted and sure enough the hotel existed. Soon after that Mikey was up, gone, played and back home with a big smile.

### Mikey Multiplied By Millions

If you want to get into a sports niche market, here’s one you can mix and match, and not only that, you’ll have close to six million Mikeys, all saying FORE! Ipsos.ca completed a survey a couple of years ago and found out that the golf participation rate in Canada was 21.5 per cent – among the highest rate in the world.

### Swinging With The Stats

Here are some stats that should help increase your marketing hook to win your slice of the pie.

- The majority of golfers in Canada continue to be males. You’re looking for Mikeys aged 18 to 64. This segment comprises 61 per cent of the total golf population. Participation rate among women climbed from 9.7 per cent in 2001 to 12.3 per cent in 2006.

- Core golfers, or those that play at least eight rounds of golf per year or more, represent nearly half at 2.73 million. The “occasional golfer” or those who play one to seven rounds of golf per year represents close to 2.83 million.

- Golfer participation rates across the country are: Saskatchewan 29.2 per cent; Manitoba 28.6 per cent; Alberta 28.2 per cent; Quebec 17.5 per cent; Nova Scotia 17.1 per cent; and Newfoundland 16.3 per cent.

- Ontario boasts the largest golfing population by province (2.31 million), followed by Quebec (1.14 million), British Columbia (0.812 million), and Alberta (0.754 million).

- Affordability is rated as the top barrier to take-up of the game among adults, and lack of playing partners and lack of free time also rate highly. Access to instruction is listed as an important factor in the take-up of golf, particularly among junior-aged golfers.

### Cheap Chips & Divotions

Whether your customers are cheap chippers or devoted to their divots – it would seem that affordability is a keyword especially given the current year. Then again we don’t necessarily have to hit every ball with the same wood. There will still be golfers who are seeking the ultimate course and who are willing to pay for it. Affordability, as in beauty,

lies in the eye of the beholder of the club. Don’t go cheap.

### Golf and...

Golf, as you well know, goes with everything. Pal Mikey carries his set of Pings in the trunk of his car. At a red light, he can manage 30 swings before the light changes. Honest! En route to a client, Mikey will somehow find a driving range just to warm up for the negotiations he’s about to enter. It’s the same with your clients who are devoted to their divots. So now, here’s where you swing into action and get to grips with your customers likes and dislikes, their sports and where they have always wanted to travel and/or golf.

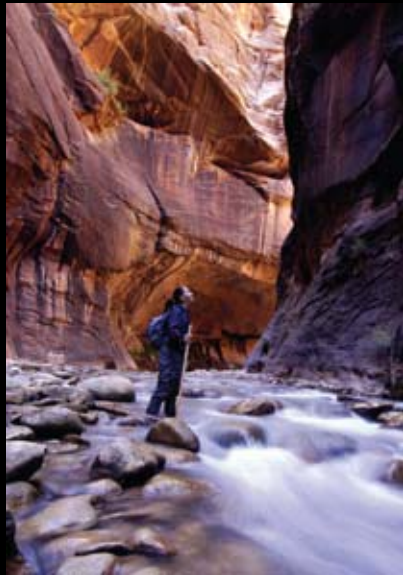
With this information you can now create or suggest your “Golf and...” packages. Golf and sun, golf and swim, golf and hike, golf cruises, golf and photography, golf and rail, golf and rental car, golf tour, golf and opera...it just doesn’t stop. The thing you need to tap into is exactly what does your client like to do after the game, other than go round once more.

### Golf Destinations

How about a change of scenery for your golfing clients? If they are a stay-at-home bunch then at least you can offer your Quebecers some prime Albertan courses and you could offer your northerners some southern comfort, and your westerners some Haligonian hospitality.

Going further afield, why not go exotic? Golfing in Thailand. China has about 200 courses. Or how about India?

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## How To Sell – Golf

India can boast 140 plus golf courses. Imagine golfing in India – *in the hills and high Himalayan fastness, in metropolitan cities and in small towns, by lakes and forests, or surrounded by tea estates, out in the deserts and in old cantonment...the flavour of India is visible everywhere.*

### Currying Favour

Here's a great theme with which you can market golfing in India. Taken from the website [www.indiagolfguide.com](http://www.indiagolfguide.com) - *India was the first country outside Great Britain to take up the game of golf. The Royal Calcutta Golf Club, established in 1829, is the oldest golf club in India and the first outside Great Britain. Because of the British rule, the eighteenth century saw a mushrooming of new golf clubs in India. The founding of the Royal Golf Club of Calcutta in 1829 was followed by the now-defunct Royal Bombay Golf Club in 1842 and the Bangalore Golf Club in 1876. Okay. Now there's some history eh? Imagine what that golf shirt looks like. How many of your golfing clients would like to say they belong to the oldest golf club in India? Check it out. Put that tour together. Golfing Nirvana is a slogan.*

### Golf a la Chinoise

China may be new to the golf scene, but as usual when they take on something, they take it on 100 per cent. Some 200 courses already. There's a huge opportunity here and that is to not only send Canadians to China to golf, but also to attract Chinese golfers here – to Canada. Inbound golf could be your next niche. Golf and Chi is a theme.

### Getting HAI! On Golf

Sure it costs a couple of million dollars to join some Japanese golf clubs, but then they are purely for Japanese. None the less, there are other clubs to play at if you wish to keep that mill' in your customer's jeans. What would golfing in Japan bring to the marketing table? Oh, how about golfing under the Cherry Blossoms, or in view of Fuji-san, or how about post golf ofuro – as in soaking in a deep bath Japanese-style? Golfing Tranquility it might be called. Here's a slogan for you: The Tee Ceremony: Golfing in Japan.

Or, Golf, Geisha and Pachinko...hmm perhaps not.

### 1,000 Courses To Play BYD

Tongue in cheek but hey...before your golfers whack the big one, give them the opportunity to birdie on the best this planet has to offer. Dig to find those 1,000 golf courses – try [worldgolf.com](http://worldgolf.com) and see what they've got. Buy a book. Get the info. What you want your golfing customers to do is to fill out their golfing Bucket List – where they want to play before they die.

If you have a website that can capture the information – have your techie create a page where your golfers can actually fill in their Bucket List. As an incentive you can offer to pay for a Bucket of Balls the next time they play a round.

### The Agency Tournament

If you are a golfer yourself why not put the agency tournament together? A great idea for corporate travel agencies. Bring your corporate customers together, add in a charity of some kind, invite a preferred supplier – get the exposure you need locally. Announce at the end of the game that you are escorting a group to Scotland...to golf Mecca. Or, if your group is adventurous, then you could state you are off to any of the destinations mentioned here or any of the other 200 countries around the world.

### The Around The World Golf Tournament

Not for the faint of heart, money, time and ambition – BUT, there is an opportunity here for someone. Choose the best courses in the world that allow walk-ins, set it up, air, hotel, excursions, etc. Search out golf instruction en route...add in sumptuous meals and perhaps you have a group of 30 or more paying the kind of bucks you've been dreaming about.

### Game On!

Some golfers like to watch. Find out who, and package 'em up and ship 'em off to see the Masters and/or a host of other tournaments – local or across the pond. No doubt Tiger fits in here somewhere as a draw. If he's playing that could be the tournament to book for. 🏌️