

Keen to procure new course signage but not spend the money on it, more and more clubs are commissioning sponsorship firms to sell the advertising space on top-quality signs, meaning they get them at no cost.

Tania Longmire
reports

In this economy, any expense begs the question of necessity and signs are no exception. Good signage provides golfers with imperative information contributing to your course's overall aesthetic and brand awareness.

The bottom line is that there is great value to signage. However, this requires financial investment and many courses just can't afford the associated costs, as a standard tee sign suite costs around £8,000 to £15,000.

That said, in today's climate many courses look to sponsorship to cover the costs. There are two avenues that courses can use: either take on the project internally using your own networking skills or engage an outsourced sponsor company.

As Ken Thornton, managing director of Woodlands Manor Golf Club in Kent explained: "We attempted our tee sponsorship internally, but after a year, only had a few sponsors. We didn't realise the sales expertise, commitment and dedication required to follow the project through. We desperately needed new signs so decided to call the experts and use a dedicated sponsorship company and discovered ProGAME. We decided they were the right company for our project, especially having an exclusive partnership with KEN WHITE SIGNS. Heidi's team [at ProGAME] were very effective and completed the sponsorship project in just two weeks. We now have quality signs and the



Forget about the price tag

added benefit of sponsors booking corporate hospitality, spending money in the bar and have gained new members from their marketing approaches."

Internal outreach certainly can work, however, it's a time consuming endeavour that requires dedicated sales staff, effective marketing, networking and project management techniques. It's no wonder that an estimated 87 percent of golf courses fail to complete their sponsorship proposition and fall short of funds.

When working with an outsourced sponsor company, you should receive your signage absolutely free of charge. They will conduct all sponsor outreach, leaving your staff free to focus on their core jobs.

There are numerous organisations that facilitate course sign sponsorship programmes throughout the UK; however, the reputability and deliverables vary greatly between them.

Unfortunately, a few bad apples have tarnished the industry by not delivering completed sponsorship programmes, lack of customer service and, in many cases, providing the golf club with a cheap set of poorly designed soft wood tee signs not suitable for outside weather conditions.

Mike Ducker, general manager of Reigate Hill Golf Club in Surrey, engaged one such a company, but was lucky enough to terminate his contract due to a breach of the terms and conditions.

He said: "I was shocked that a company could conduct business in such a manner. I was very dubious about approaching another company due to my bad experience, but we were stranded as we were left with no signage. I came across ProGAME and felt confident straight away as I had heard of KEN WHITE SIGNS who have a fantastic reputation in the golfing industry. I knew that if they

had committed to work with another company, ProGAME would need to be customer focused so as not to tarnish KEN WHITE SIGNS' good name. All I can say is that it was a totally different experience – their work ethic is exceptional, they have never let me down and I would strongly advise that if you are looking for an outsourced company, ProGAME is the one to call."

ProGAME are the fastest growing sponsor company in the UK, providing a professional service for clubs that are seeking alternative ways to fund their signage.

"Customer satisfaction is absolutely paramount, not only in the product we deliver but also the service we provide. I'm proud to say we have 100 percent customer satisfaction with all our golf clubs," said Heidi Bohrn, director of ProGAME.

"When I launched my business, I knew there was a bad stigma with sponsor companies, and that's why I partnered with KEN WHITE SIGNS. We can provide the best tee sign design out on the golf course for free; no other company is doing this presently. We will only ever use top quality

hardwood timbers that are very durable and suitable for long term outdoor use, you just lightly oil the structures yearly to keep their pristine condition indefinitely. Of course, it's more expensive to produce, but we are committed to providing quality to our partners. Other sponsor companies use inferior materials and finish the timber with varnishes, unfortunately you lose the aesthetic feel of the wood and once the varnish begins to break down it requires high maintenance to try and keep the signage looking fresh."

Ben White at KEN WHITE SIGNS added: "We have a great partnership with ProGAME and have been able to provide our services to all types of golf courses, who are delighted to receive top quality products at no cost. No matter what sign you require, ProGAME will fund the project, the hardwood tee signage is our most popular product. We are also designing bespoke car park, directional and clubhouse signage for Royal Ashdown Golf Club, commissioned by Weston Turville Golf Club for additional



'Welcome' signs, we've delivered granite tee signs to Oake Manor Golf Club and our eco friendly design sign is very popular and maintenance free. We just get the go ahead to work with the golf club who are then in total charge of their product finish. As far as I know, other sponsor companies only work with one design and certainly cannot match the standard of graphics and material we use."

So, if your signs need replacing and you have the capability to manage the project in-house, then you should be able to get the results you need. However if you are looking to outsource, then carefully vet potential partners and contact other golf courses they have on their portfolio to make sure you get the right service you desire. ProGAME has released a free buyers' guide to course signage sponsorship, discussing in-house or outsourcing sponsorship in more detail.

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For your free copy, tel: 0800 206 2260, email: signage@progamegolfsigns.com or visit www.progamegolfsigns.com

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- ✓ Retail options available

