



Pairings are one of the most critical

but most often overlooked aspects of tournament planning.

While some groups want exceptional competition, others just want comfortable camaraderie. Either way, the goal is to allow participants to have fun and build relationships, regardless of their skill levels.

The tournament registration form is the place to start. At a minimum, it should ask for the player's name, title, organization, and handicap. Depending on your attendees and the goals of your tournament, you may need other information. For example, if you want to pair prospective customers with long-time customers and a sales rep, you may want a way for registrants to indicate whether they are a customer, prospective customer, sales staff, product manager, etc.

The handicap is needed because it is a numerical representation of a golfer's playing ability. The lower the handicap, the better the player. A 2 handicapper is better than a 20 handicapper.

Consider the following guidelines when creating foursomes:



1-10 Handicap

Skilled, frequent player



11-20 Handicap

Competitive, infrequent player



21-30 Handicap

Plays 3-5X per year, fair player



31+ or No Handicap

Novice player

Tip #1

For outings that offer prizes, and when you're playing a scramble or best-ball format, **equity is paramount**. If most players have handicaps, divide them into A, B, C, and D groups and draw one player from each group for each foursome.

While computer programs can do much of the work of creating pairings, don't leave your important pairings to chance. It helps to work with someone who knows the participants and their roles, backgrounds, and interests.

Tip #2

When it comes to the sometimes-tricky-question of the VIP foursomes, remember to **keep the pairings balanced**. The boss's team should be competitive, but not one that will win automatically. For a shotgun start, the VIP group should start on hole No. 1. If you're playing straight consecutive tee times, the VIP group should go first. Work closely with your course contact to ensure a smooth pace of play for the VIP group. Don't allow a group of beginners to start in front of them.

Tip #3



For Customer Outings a golf tournament is a great way to say thank you to valued clients, and it's important to create pairings that strategically combine vendors, clients, and staff.

Use non-sales executives strategically. For example, pairing a knowledgeable product manager with an important client allows both to get important insights into the product.

Remember: This is not a hard-sell environment. The emphasis should be on saying thank you to those who have helped to make the company successful, not on selling.

Tip #4



For Employee Outings a golf event can build company camaraderie and morale. Some pairing considerations for an employee outing:

- Try to match players who do not work together every day, to expand their knowledge of the company and encourage teamwork.
- Pair people from departments that depend on each other. For example, place someone from accounting with someone from the field.
- Position customer relations or telemarketing reps with marketing executives to facilitate ideas on how to better serve customers.

Tip #5



For Product Launches a golf outing is a great way to roll out a new product, either on the course or at a pre- or post-event presentation. It's important to promote it that way so your invitees understand that they will learn more about the product throughout the day.

- Pair executives with people in similar positions from other companies to promote relationship building.
- Pair long time customers with new or prospective clients.
- As a rule, sales executives should play in different foursomes.
- Showcase features and benefits of the new product at various holes. Sales execs or product managers could stand at the tee box and welcome players with gifts or samples of the product.

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