**Yardstick’s Indoor Golf Player Survey**

Yardstick Golf recently completed a survey of indoor golfers to understand their preferences and find out more about what might make their experience more enjoyable or more frequent. This paper shares what we found and how you might use the information.

I’ve had this study out for a while and have had some difficulty getting a large volume of responses. I’ve also had to reject quite a few that provided inaccurate information. As you read through the survey results, I do want readers to be aware it is based on ~50 responses. I also found it quite interesting that the survey responses were 96% male. Women may be an untapped market. . .

Let’s start by looking at coupons and discounts as it was the most important factors across the survey in driving play. We’ll break it down by handicap and how far folks drove to visit a facility. A lower number represents a higher importance placed on the coupons and discounts.

The bars are also shaded by how far players in each group drove to play their last round of indoor golf. Handicaps were created in bins (I.e. 0-9, 10-19, 20-29 and 30-39).

What the chart to the left shows is that the lower a player’s handicap, the more they value coupons and discounts. It also shows they are not willing to drive as far to play as higher handicap players.

Before giving up on the low handicap players, it is interesting to note that they are more likely to recommend a friend play indoor golf and are more likely to play again themselves in the next month (next two charts below). This may point to an opportunity to offer coupons to your low handicap customers in return for referrals or setting up group events. They can potentially serve as your key influencers to bring in other players.





Food and beverage (F&B) sales are an important part of the indoor golf business. F&B specials seem to be most emphasized by players over 40 and the over 40 crowd in general seems to be the most likely to be high frequency players.

 

**The next four charts break down the questions we asked about what would make you play indoor golf more frequently. 1 indicates the top choice and 10 indicated the bottom choice, so short bars in the charts indicate the biggest positive impact on playing more frequently.**

****Low handicap (0-9) players reported coupons and discounts as the top items that could encourage them to play more often. Food and beverage specials were next on the list.

What is interesting is that the next three items on the list are items that speak to competition and frequent play.

Demo clubs, club storage and reserved regular teem times don’t seem to be much of an enticement for your best players.

The next tier with handicaps between 10 and 19 indicated the frequent player card was the item most likely to encourage them to play more often**.**

Coupons and discounts also appear to be important, but not as important as they are to your top players. On the flip side, they are less likely to enter tournaments.

Demo clubs and reserved tee times are also more important to this group. Perhaps combining the frequent play card with reserved times would be a good promotion for this group.

Handicaps between 20-29 really don’t differentiate much other than to indicate a desire to play in tournaments. They do indicate a pretty strong interest in tournaments.

Just about every other response is near the average of 5, which indicates responses were all over the map.

The one thing that is clear is that club storage doesn’t seem to encourage much more play.

Our last chart represents your high handicap players 30+. This group really has a strong preference for a reserved and regular tee time and is less sensitive to price (average response on coupons and discounts).

They don’t appear likely to play in tournaments or leagues, nor do they feel a need to use the frequent player card.
**Putting it all together:**

These are a few insights I think the data is telling me. This was a nationwide sample, but did not generate a large response base. I would suggest thinking of these as directional notions and advise adding your own insights from running your business to make use of this information. If I ran a center, here are a few things I would consider based on the surveys.

1. Watch your players – understand their skill level, talk to them about what they want and offer appropriate promotions to encourage more play. Build your own playbook on targeting customers by skill level.
2. High handicap players – appear to be less price sensitive and want regular reserved tee times. Offering programs that give them regular tee times can drive more play. Consider things like bulk scheduling of several weeks at a time or selling memberships that are basically pre-selling a set of regularly scheduled slots may be a good option.
3. Low handicap players – appear to be the most price sensitive bunch, are the most likely to be high frequency players and are most likely to bring a friend. A potential approach would be to offer discounts at non-peak times and/or discounts for buying times in bulk. They may also be a good group to approach about creating group outings or helping find players for tournaments in exchange for a discounted price.
4. Middle handicap players – This group is a bit more of a mystery. It would be a great idea to pay attention to what is bringing them to play. It appears frequent player cards and tournaments are a good idea, but not an overly strong draw here.

**Verbatim Feedback** – This is the specific feedback from customers taking our survey. This is the raw, unfiltered information they shared with us on what it would take to play inside more often or improve their overall experience.

**Is there anything we can do that would make you want to play inside instead a bit more often?**

* Find me time in my schedule?!?!?
* Free advice/lessons while I play
* Good lighting and vitamin D lamps
* Improve on the time aspect of the game. I'd play more if the speed was quicker
* In my case reduce the price during the working week, I do not have much time to play REAL golf except on a weekend
* It's hot In Arizona the summers at a cheap rate or winters at a cheap rate so it's cheaper to play inside
* Make the rates less than what it costs to play at local courses. It still is an economic thing
* Maybe with training
* More food choices
* More indoor golf facilities
* Not really... In South Dakota, when the weather is nice enough to play outside, you play outside.
* Offer big discounts
* Quality service and high-end aesthetic design
* Reduce the price
* Specials at night. That is when I think you have the best chance if any to get a group of guys to come in, play, drink, watch the ball game.
* Time. give me a 4 hour special or rate instead of a round

**Is there anything else you like to share that would help us improve your overall experience?**

* It is great in the winter no doubt but just too expensive for the average guy to use very often.
* Make sure mats are in good condition.
* More tournaments
* Not really it's fun to do with a group so maybe group specials
* outdoor sounds
* Reduce the price