



Kitson & Partners Implements The Smart Circle's Referral Marketing Program to Drive Sales and Increase Revenue

SITUATION

Kitson & Partners, based in West Palm Beach, Florida is the leading provider of operational turnaround management services for lenders, investment banking organizations, real estate developers and municipal governments. Kitson & Partners has four distinctive divisions, one of which is the Golf Management Division, designed to offer clients a wealth of experience in golf club operations and related businesses.

Kitson & Partners opened its Golf Management division in 1999. Since that time, the company has helped more than 200 public and private golf clubs with strategic business initiatives to build market share, upgrade quality and service, and reduce overhead costs.

CHALLENGE

Kitson & Partners needed to reach new and existing customers in the El Paso, Texas, area that they did not have the resources to connect with otherwise. Prior to teaming up with The Smart Circle, Kitson & Partners initiated grass roots public relations efforts, bought advertising in various media outlets and partnered with Web-based tee time marketers; however, none of these efforts generated the revenue and brand awareness they desired.

STRATEGY

In 2000, Kitson & Partners partnered with The Smart Circle, the worldwide leader in person-to-person advertising, in an effort to increase revenue, fill unused capacity, enhance brand loyalty and significantly increase the rounds of golf played per year at its 20 managed golf courses. The Smart Circle was in charge of developing a strategic marketing plan that would accomplish these goals and position Kitson & Partners as one of the leading real estate management and consulting companies in the nation.

- ◆ Kitson & Partners worked closely with The Smart Circle to create the parameters of the golf club offer for consumers
- ◆ The Smart Circle was called upon to serve as a strategic sounding board during the review and approval processes of the marketing campaign
- ◆ Professional collateral materials were developed and produced by The Smart Circle to correlate with the offer to be provided by Kitson & Partners
- ◆ The Smart Circle conducted a training session with course level staff and in-market sales team in preparation for the launch of the campaign
- ◆ The Smart Circle sales team began traveling to meet face-to-face with prospective and current customers to market the Kitson & Partners special offer

RESULTS

“The phone began ringing in the golf shop as soon as The Smart Circle’s direct sales team hit the neighborhoods,” said Greg Christovich, Vice President of Operations for Kitson & Partners’ Club Services Division. “Within one week, the Smart Circle cards began appearing from new and returning customers looking to utilize the offers.”

- ◆ In El Paso, The Smart Circle’s referral marketing campaign resulted in over *3,000 incremental rounds* of golf played at Kitson & Partners’ two managed courses
- ◆ Marketing activities generated by The Smart Circle resulted in a significant increase in rounds of golf played by new and returning customers
- ◆ Customer loyalty to the golf courses continues to increase word-of-mouth referrals from existing customers to play at Kitson & Partners’ golf clubs

THE LONG TERM

The quality of The Smart Circle’s management and sales team, the professionalism of their approach, their understanding of the golf industry, and their ability to leverage and penetrate segments that were impossible for the Golf Management Division to reach on its own sealed the deal for Kitson & Partners. The Smart Circle and Kitson & Partners are in the process of rolling out their next referral marketing campaign with the same strategic goals of driving additional traffic, increasing revenue, and generating more brand awareness.

“My managers love the program because it brings them rounds they would otherwise never be able to get to on their own,” said Christovich. “Our guests love the program because it enables them to play more golf and even invite friends, and they consider the card a reward for their loyalty to the course.”