



Olde Sycamore Golf Plantation Increases Member Base and Rounds Played Through The Smart Circle's Referral Marketing Program

SITUATION

Olde Sycamore Golf Plantation, based in Charlotte, North Carolina is a semi-private club designed by renowned course architect, Tom Jackson. The 18-hole golf course, which is built around a neighborhood, also has a clubhouse, restaurant and catering staff for golf tournaments and other events. In addition to the club amenities, the course's Bermuda fairways and Crenshaw Bent Grass greens are just some of the reasons that Olde Sycamore was rated "Best New Course" and "Best Golf Course Eastside" by Charlotte's Best Magazine and the #1 golf course to play for Charlotte residents by GolfCarolina.com.

Founded in 1997, Olde Sycamore Golf Plantation partnered with The Smart Circle for a new marketing initiative in March of 2006. Since that time, The Smart Circle has helped Olde Sycamore build a larger member base and experience a significant increase in complete rounds of golf played.

CHALLENGE

Olde Sycamore's General Manager and PGA professional, B. Dwayne Simpson felt that the golf market as a whole was steadily becoming devalued and was looking for a means of bringing in new customers. The course's traditional marketing approach of relying solely on advertising in newspaper and golf print was only attaining half of the results they desired. They needed something that not only publicized the course's offerings, but enticed players to actually come by and try a few rounds out for themselves.

STRATEGY

In 2006, Olde Sycamore Golf Plantation partnered with The Smart Circle, the worldwide leader in person-to-person advertising, to create a campaign that would expose new and existing clients to its wide range of services, and significantly increase the foot traffic and rounds of golf played at the course. The Smart Circle developed a strategic marketing plan that would accomplish these goals and position Olde Sycamore as one of the premier golf clubs in the country.

- ◆ Olde Sycamore worked closely with The Smart Circle to create the parameters of the promotional offers 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 offers developed for Olde Sycamore Golf Plantation
- ◆ The Smart Circle conducted a training session with 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 Olde Sycamore's special offerings

RESULTS

"We started our program in early March and we immediately saw an increase in traffic that April," said B. Dwayne Simpson, general manager for Olde Sycamore Golf Plantation. "The thing with advertising in newspaper is you hope it works that soon. With the Smart Card, we know people are coming in the door."

- ◆ The Smart Circle's referral marketing campaign resulted in more than 1,500 newly generated rounds of golf for the club
- ◆ Marketing activities generated by The Smart Circle resulted in an immediate increase in foot traffic and repeat customer visits
- ◆ Approximately \$50,000 in new revenue was generated as a result of the program's first nine months of operation

The quality of The Smart Circle's management and sales team and the professionalism of their approach sealed made The Smart Circle's marketing support ideal for Olde Sycamore. The campaign aligned with Olde Sycamore's strategic goals of driving additional traffic, increasing revenue, and generating more brand awareness. "The Smart Circle's program is not a mass production that is just thrown to the public, it is a targeted campaign that kept revenue per round in mind at zero out-of-pocket cost to us, and which continues to bring valuable results to our organization."