

# Could A Golf Event Be Right For Your Chapter?

## 5 Areas To Assess



Golf tournaments are a popular event for many association chapters. They're a great way to get a variety of audiences – current and retired members, potential members, vendors, existing and potential sponsors, community members, etc. – engaged, while bringing in money, having a good time outdoors and networking. However, there are chapters that avoid them — their boards picture golf tournaments as overwhelming events that require a lot of planning, management and time from many volunteers, volunteers they're not sure they have.



### 5 benefits of golf tournaments to chapters

Yes, the effort and investment of golf events can be higher than other chapter events. But when they are executed correctly, the return can be worth the effort, in benefits from fundraising to networking.

Some of the biggest benefits of holding a golf event include:

1. **Revenue generation.** Golf tournaments can bring in substantial income to chapters. It can come from individual players through entry fees, raffles and auctions, as well as sponsorships, which can bring in larger dollars, through opportunities like hole sponsorships, signage and giveaways.

2. **Member engagement.** In a relaxed setting, members can have an easier time building relationships while meeting community members and industry professionals. It's a great way to better connect current members to your chapter and boost member retention.
3. **Brand awareness.** Through things like chapter signage on the course, social media exposure and press coverage, it's a chance to expand and enhance a chapter's reputation. This visibility can ultimately lead to new members and new sponsors by attracting people who might not know about the chapter otherwise.
4. **Professional networking.** On the golf course, at meals and breaks and the post-tournament award ceremony, attendees spend time together, encouraging informal networking and creating space for discussions and collaborations.
5. **Community Impact.** Chapters often set up tournaments to support charities, scholarships, industry-related causes or some combination. This reinforces the chapter's commitment to giving back and reinforces its presence in the community.

### Is a golf tournament right for your chapter? 5 considerations

Knowing all the benefits a well-executed golf tournament can provide, maybe you're considering having one. Before you jump in, there are a few things that should weigh into your decision-making, to make sure it will be all you want it to be. Discussing the following questions as a board and with input from your membership can help you reach the right decision. Think about whether you:

1. **Have the right audience.** Who goes to chapter golf tournament? They can be pricey events for attendees as well as for the chapter. If the group of potential attendees won't cover your expenses, it might not be worth it. To get a picture of who could attend, review your chapter database of members, sponsors, community members, etc. Review their demographics and their level of interest and understand who has attended more expensive events and responded to fundraising campaigns.
2. **Have enough people to make the event happen.** These events require work from a lot of people. Do you have enough volunteers in the right roles available to plan and execute the event, keeping in mind you'll need people before, during and after. You'll also need volunteers to help get the word out about the event, keep track of money coming in and going out, etc.



3. **Know the goals for your golf tournament.** Sure, you can have a golf event just to be outside and have fun, and maybe that's enough. But since tournaments tend to take a lot of effort, what does your chapter really want to get from holding one? Is it increasing awareness or engagement or to fundraise and bring in a specific amount of money?
4. **Can get outside help.** This isn't something you want to cover 100 percent of the costs for. Your checklist should include developing a plan to find sponsors for different areas. Where will you want people and organizations to donate? Are there local connections that you could tap, like a golf course to donate space for the tournament, vendors for in-kind donations of awards, food, signage, promotion, etc.?
5. **Have the right tools to execute the right event.** This is where your chapter infrastructure will play a significant role. Can the platform you use handle the necessary email and social media, website landing page, registration and payment for an event of this size?

After going through this exercise, you may find that you want to hold the tournament, but it doesn't make sense for your chapter to manage the whole thing alone. This could be a great opportunity to partner with another organization that is compatible with yours.

### **What about the non-golfers?**

Don't forget about those who don't play golf. Consider holding a "19th hole" post-outing activity, where those who played and those who didn't play can enjoy cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and food. Adding live and silent auctions can give everyone a chance for some fun, and another chance for the chapter to bring in additional donations.

Golf tournaments have been shown to be one of the bigger fundraising events for chapters, getting people out and aware of your chapter who might not come to a networking event or a chapter meeting. Set up the right tournament and watch what happens organically for attendees and your chapter.

