The Southwest Section PGA
Generates New Revenue with Opticard

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The Southwest Section PGA (SWSPGA) is one of 41 sections of the Professional Golfers' Association of America. The SWSPGA oversees PGA programs for golf professionals throughout Arizona and Las Vegas. The SWSPGA includes nearly 1,400 PGA members and apprentices involved in the operations of more than 350 golf facilities. The Section is the local delivery system for the PGA of America programs and activities to promote the game of golf in this region and to enhance the skills of its members.

The SWSPGA Seeks a New System

Several years ago, the SWSPGA began a golf pass ID card program. The initial golf pass provided various discounts, but the system did not support online member registration or usage tracking. Although members received some benefits, the SWSPGA was not fully developing a customer database nor regularly tracking how its customers used its facilities.

In 2003, the SWSPGA began evaluating ways to enhance its golf pass program. The SWSPGA wanted a way to learn more about its current members—their needs, habits and demographic profiles. The SWSPGA also wanted to provide a reward and loyalty program that would entice members to try different golf courses within the Southwest and participate in additional golf programs. A method to easily track card usage and an automated registration system were two additional key elements the SWSPGA sought.

After evaluating several gift and loyalty card providers, the SWSPGA ultimately chose to partner with Opticard. In addition to Opticard's expertise in gift and loyalty programs, the solution could be used across all of SWSPGA's golf courses; each of which is owned and operated independently.

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Sean Ferris
Director of the Golf Pass and
Junior Golf Programs, SWSPGA

The New Golf Pass Program Goes into Full Swing

Working with Opticard, the SWSPGA re-launched its golf pass program in 2004 and has successfully deployed a program to capture member demographics and analyze the usage behavior of its 24,000 participants. Members purchase a golf pass annually at one of the golf courses and then register their details online to ensure maximum benefits from the program.

"One of our key goals was to create a way for members to self-register on the Web," said Sean Ferris, Director of the Golf Pass and Junior Golf Programs at the SWSPGA. "We used to manage registrations manually, which was laborious. Now, with Opticard's registration database and Web templates, we can quickly and easily plug registrations into our Web site."

The SWSPGA provides several incentives for members to register online. Registered golf pass members are entitled to special discounts on greens fees, course programs and purchases from the pro shops. Furthermore, members receive reward points for all purchases. The points are redeemed for awards at set levels. The card is swiped at the point of sale, and all the data is immediately associated with the member.

The Opticard loyalty program offers several management tools that allow the SWSPGA to provide excellent service to its members while also tracking important usage data. "We use Opticard's Web-based administrative tool every day," said Ferris. "There is always a need to suspend a pass, restore a pass or transfer points. The Opticard interface makes it easy to handle all of these functions."

Opticard Offers Multiple POS Options

With Opticard, the SWSPGA now has more control and flexibility over all aspects of the golf pass program. This is particularly true with POS system integration. "With our initial program, we rolled the program out using VeriFone® terminals at each course," said Ferris. "However, working with Opticard, we now have the application running on a variety of POS environments. Some courses have a PC-based system, others an integrated POS and still others use a stand-beside VeriFone terminal that handles their credit, debit and golf pass program cards."

The Opticard loyalty platform supports multiple POS devices and provides reporting for the entire SWSPGA program while also providing course-specific reports that allow each club to assess how the program is working. "The staff at Opticard helped us develop the loyalty program and then implement it quickly," said Ferris. "They worked with us to select and integrate the POS terminals, set up the specific point levels for our loyalty programs and drive customer adoption."

Opticard Provides Rewards for Everyone

The golf pass program is generating new annual revenue for the SWSPGA and its 80+ participating golf courses. "This loyalty program is a win-win for both us and the golfers," said Ferris. "It's a really popular program, and there is no way we could track the usage and award loyalty points without Opticard."

With Opticard's online tracking and reporting tools, the SWSPGA can view who its less frequent players are and thus take action by providing them with unique incentives. The SWSPGA can also easily identify its most frequent players and give them added benefits as well. "The golf pass program running on the Opticard platform is letting us connect with our members like never before," said Ferris. "We've built our entire loyalty and rewards program around the Opticard service, and now our golf pass program even has its own Web site."

About Opticard

Founded in 1995, Opticard is an industry leader in implementing and managing a variety of card programs. Opticard processes over 20 million transactions per year at nearly 50,000 installed POS locations, representing billions in transaction volume annually. Opticard is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Planet Group, Inc.

About Planet Group, Inc.

Planet Group, Inc. is a privately held corporation and holding company of a diverse group of technology and business solutions companies. Planet Group's companies provide solutions and services such as information technology consulting, electronic payment processing, secure correspondence portals and business process management to Fortune 500 companies in the financial services, healthcare, banking, retail, and consumer industrial and technology industries.

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