



BIO OF SPECIAL AWARDS CANDIDATE

Name of Nominee: Mark Bayer, PGA

Year Elected to Membership: 1994 (Quarter Century Member – 2019)

Award Nominated for: Merchandiser of the Year – Public Category 2020

Sugar Springs Golf is a public golf club owned by a Property Owners Association that services a development of 1,500 home sites and surrounding Gladwin/West Branch, MI area. The golf shop is owned and operated by the Head PGA Golf Professional which is quite unique amongst most daily-fee, public access courses in the golf business. This requires additional planning and developing a buying plan that will allow for the appropriate open-to-buy. Additionally, as a sole-proprietor cash flow and merchandise turns need to be optimized to benefit sales, merchandise presentation and margins all within the weather plagued 7 month season in Mid-Michigan.

My mission with the golf shop is to sell quality merchandise at a price equivalent or better than the “box” stores or discount golf houses. Additionally, carrying items that the box-stores don’t to provide some competitive advantage and distinct shopping experience. In the world that clients can get it from “Amazon” in a day with free shipping or less has put the onus on the operators to be creative and flexible to get what the customer wants as soon as possible and priced accordingly. Golf shop staff are included in sales reps meetings so they can be taught the features and benefits of garments, equipment and accessories. Demo days and fitting days have generated \$10-\$12,000 in equipment sales annually while price matching when possible to create some customer confidence and loyalty.

The Sugar Springs Golf Shop has 700 square feet of retail space. The merchandise mix has changed from “golf-only” to a mix that all clientele from the sweatshirt/fitness client to the high-end outerwear and dress clothing to everything in-between including a great equipment selection. I have developed a following of non-golfers and golfers from other clubs that come shop the store due to the great merchandise assortment and changing inventory mixes. I incorporated a Monthly Golf Newsletter that is sent out with special merchandise promotions via **Constant Contact** and our **Facebook Page** that has generated additional interest in walk in traffic to the facility for both golf and merchandise.

The club hosts several charity outings for Gladwin Veterans Association and Alzheimer’s Association that we highlight Made in USA Products from Fairway & Greene as well as doing a ¼ of the golf shop in purple apparel/garments for ALZ awareness and drive sales around those events.

Total Sales volume has increased 30.8 percent since 2012 years despite fewer rounds from my core-golfers which are my prepaid members. Margins in that same time have also remain near 27% overall with timely buying and stock/inventory levels being fresh to generate new sales each month. Total shop sales have increased from \$78,000 in 2008 (1st year) to near \$140,000 projected in 2019, which will be my 12th season.

My operation is also unique in the fact that I have one full-time staff member and use several part-time employees to assist in the merchandising of the facility while maintaining golf operations, teaching and supervising the golf course maintenance activities. Thank for to the section members for this nomination and honor.

Respectfully Submitted: Mark Bayer, PGA