

INTRODUCTORY GUIDE: GOLF COURSE MARKETING FOR 18–26 YEAR OLDS

JANUARY 2014



NEXTGENGOLF

GUIDE OUTLINE

- Defining the landscape
- Is your golf course relevant online?
- What do 18–26 year olds value in a course?
- Social Networks: The only 3 that matter
- Conclusions & additional resources

Is this guide right for you?

If you are a golf course owner or operator and are serious about improving your business and marketing to the next generation of golfers, this introductory guide will provide new insight to help you achieve your goals.



ABOUT NEXTGENGOLF

Grow your revenue in 2014 through Nextgen

Hosting tournaments

Nextgen golf will run over 100 golf tournaments in 2014 all across the country. Nextgen tournaments are exclusively for 18–29 year old golfers

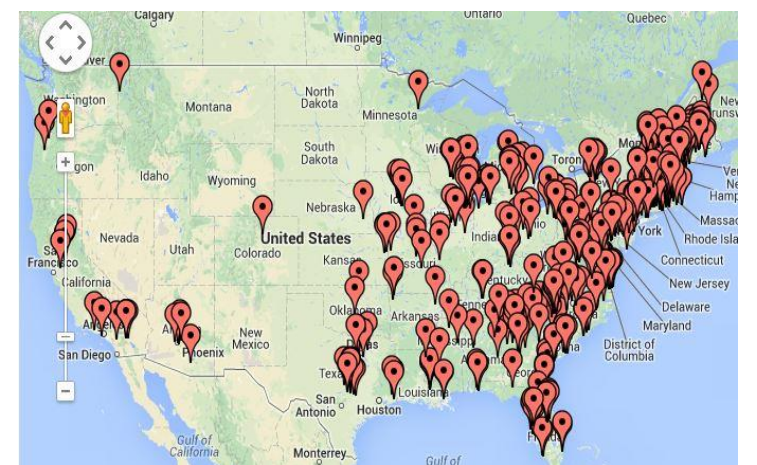
[Learn more](#)



Promoting college daily play rates

Nextgen supports over 10,000 college students across the country and has over 500 golf course partners. Courses interested in generating more revenue from students can offer a collegiate rate through Nextgen Collegiate.

[Learn more](#)



Inviting Graduate Raters to your course

Starting in 2014, Nextgen will be developing a platform for young adults to rate and review both public and private golf courses near major cities. All Nextgen Raters will be between the ages of 18–29 and provide detailed consulting to golf courses.

[Learn more](#)



GUIDE AUTHOR

Online Golf Course Marketing for Gen-Y By Kris Hart

Kris is the CEO and Co-founder of Nextgengolf. Kris is at the forefront of understanding the next generation of golfers. He leads the strategy and execution of all of Nextgen's products and is a contributor to the Nextgen blog.



Follow Kris on Twitter
[@collegegolfguy](https://twitter.com/collegegolfguy)



DEFINING THE GEN-Y LANDSCAPE



- Population
- Golf penetration
- Key traits
- Spending habits
- Why you should care?



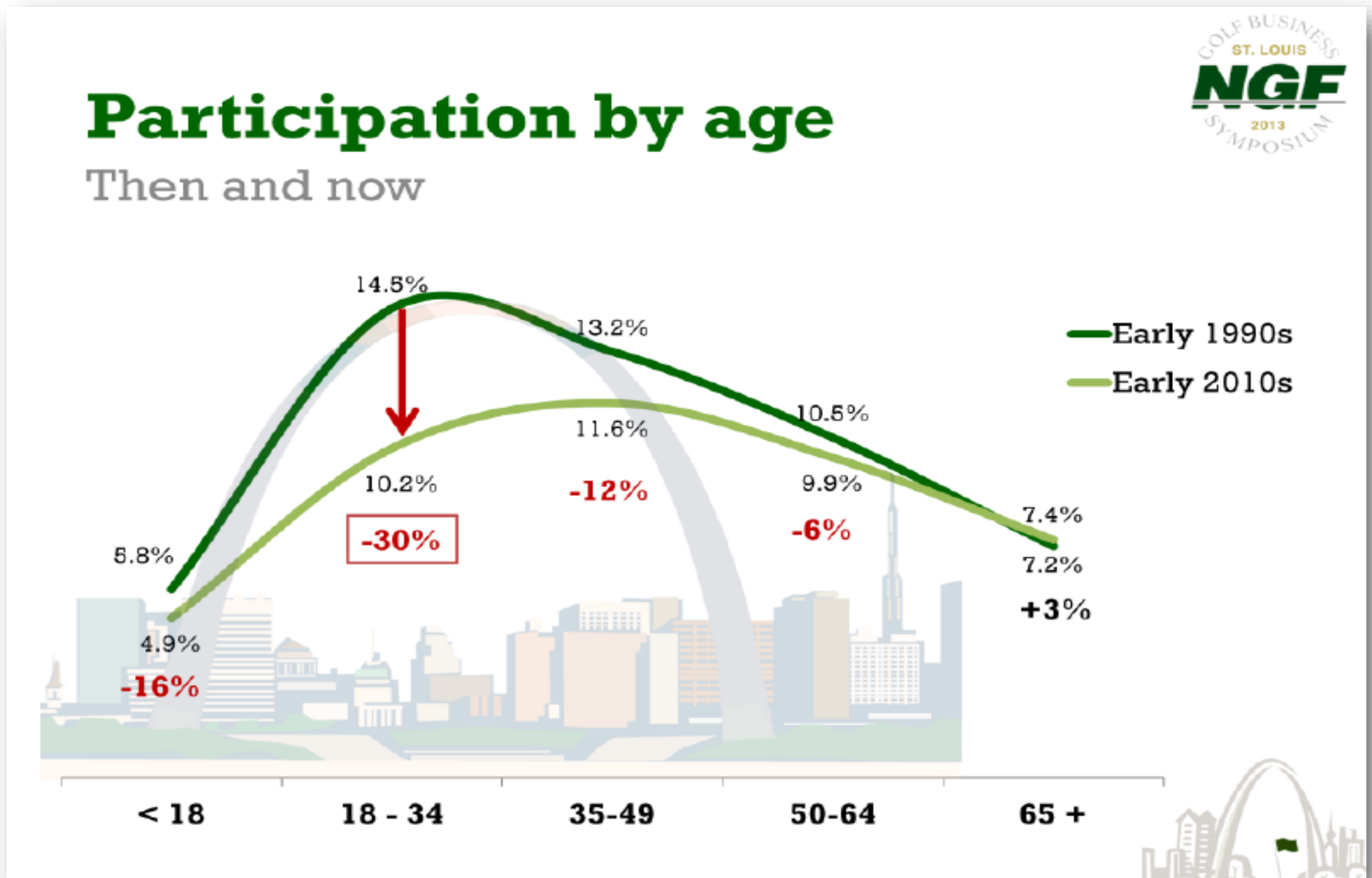
POPULATION



According to a 2013 eMarketer study,
there are approximately
73 million 18–34 year old Gen–Y
consumers in the United States.



GOLFER PENETRATION



According to NGF research, in 2012 there were approximately 6.3MM 18–34 year old golfers. From the early 1990s to early 2010s, the total number of 18–34 players has declined by 30%.



KEY TRAITS



- Unpredictable
- Impatient
- Tech-savvy
- Intelligent consumers
- Smartphone owners
- Active on key social networks

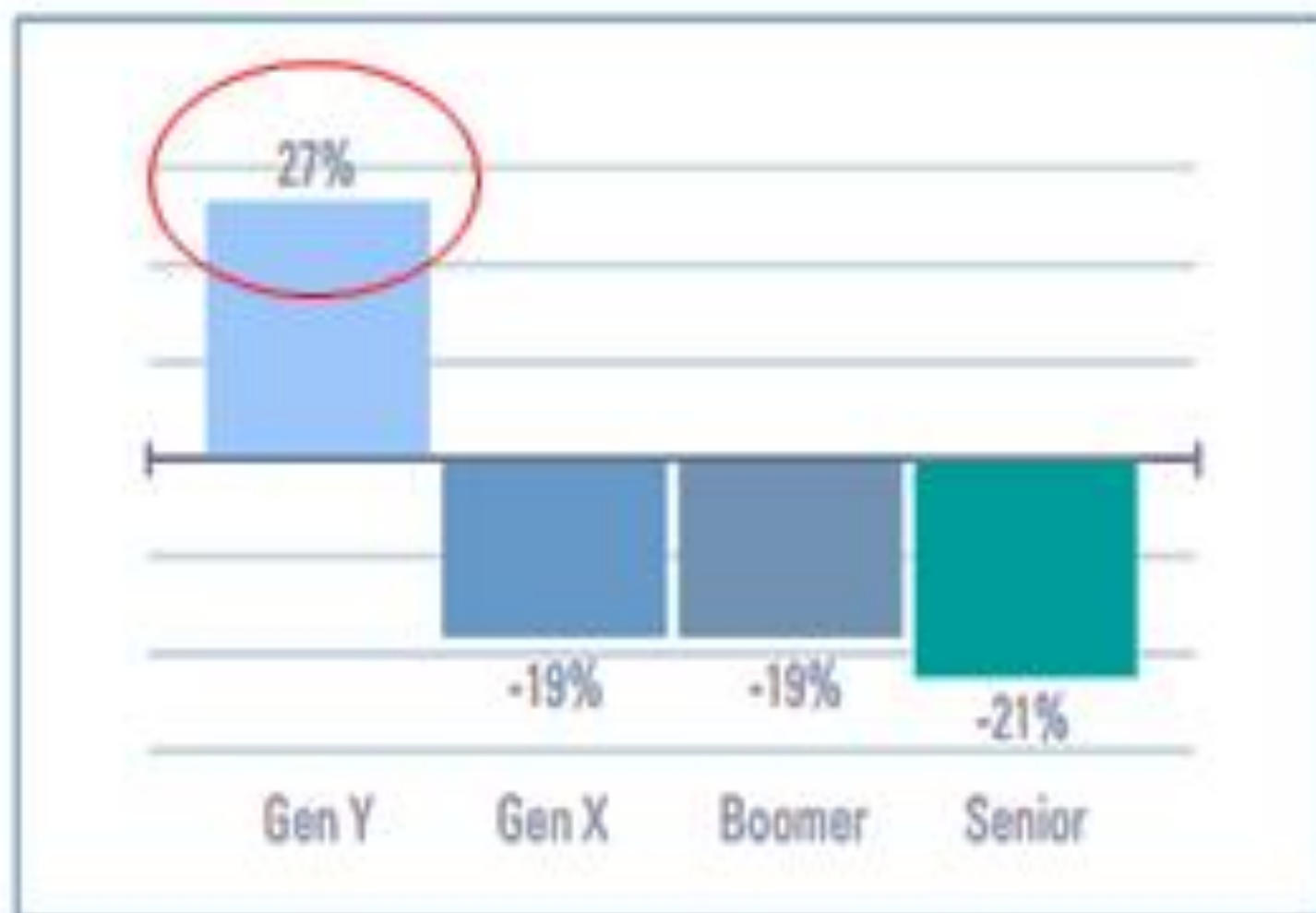


WILLING TO SPEND

Gen Y Begins to Compete with Boomers for Tee Times

While Gen Y comprises just 1% of total golf spend, this group is the fastest growing, with a 27% increase in spending between 2007 and 2011. Boomers, who make up 33% of the total population, still comprise the majority of golf spending (56%), although their spending declined 19% between 2007 and 2011.

Change in Golf Spending by Generation (2007 vs 2011)



2011, American Express Spend Sights Special Report, US Business & Consumer Golf Spending

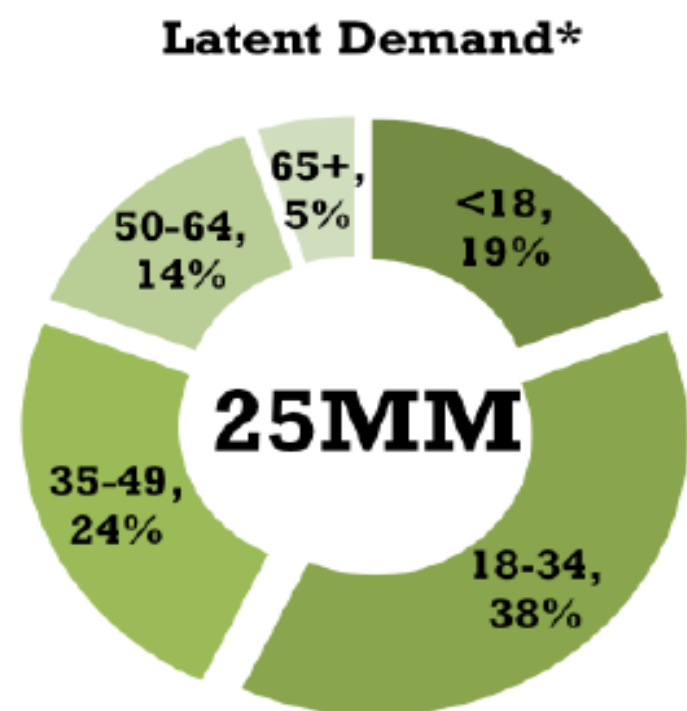


GEN-Y OPPORTUNITY

Why is the 18-34 group so important?



-  28% of all golfers (7MM+)
-  Historically, highest participation rate
-  Age when most take up the game
-  Greatest amount of **latent demand***



* non-golfers very/somewhat interested in playing now



According to 2013 NGF research, although the number of 18–34 year old golfers has declined, Gen–Y presents the biggest untapped opportunity.



IS YOUR GOLF COURSE RELEVANT ONLINE AND ON MOBILE?




- Online presence
- Mobile optimization
- Search coverage




YOUR COURSE = YOUR PRODUCT. WOULD I BUY IT ONLINE?

Elmcrest Country Club




The
Elmcrest
Country Club



105 Somersville Road • East Longmeadow, Mass. 01028 • Club House: (413) 525-6641 • Pro Shop: (413) 525-8444 • Club Manager: (413) 575-7477

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[What's New](#)
[Pro Shop](#)
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Elmcrest has weathered well with many members and guests playing throughout the winter. The 19th hole restaurant is open on a day to day basis, because as everyone knows, New England weather can change in a moment. If anyone wishes to redeem their golf gift certificates please know carts are rolling. We still have a few outing dates open and have some great golf memberships for yourself or as a gift.

About Us

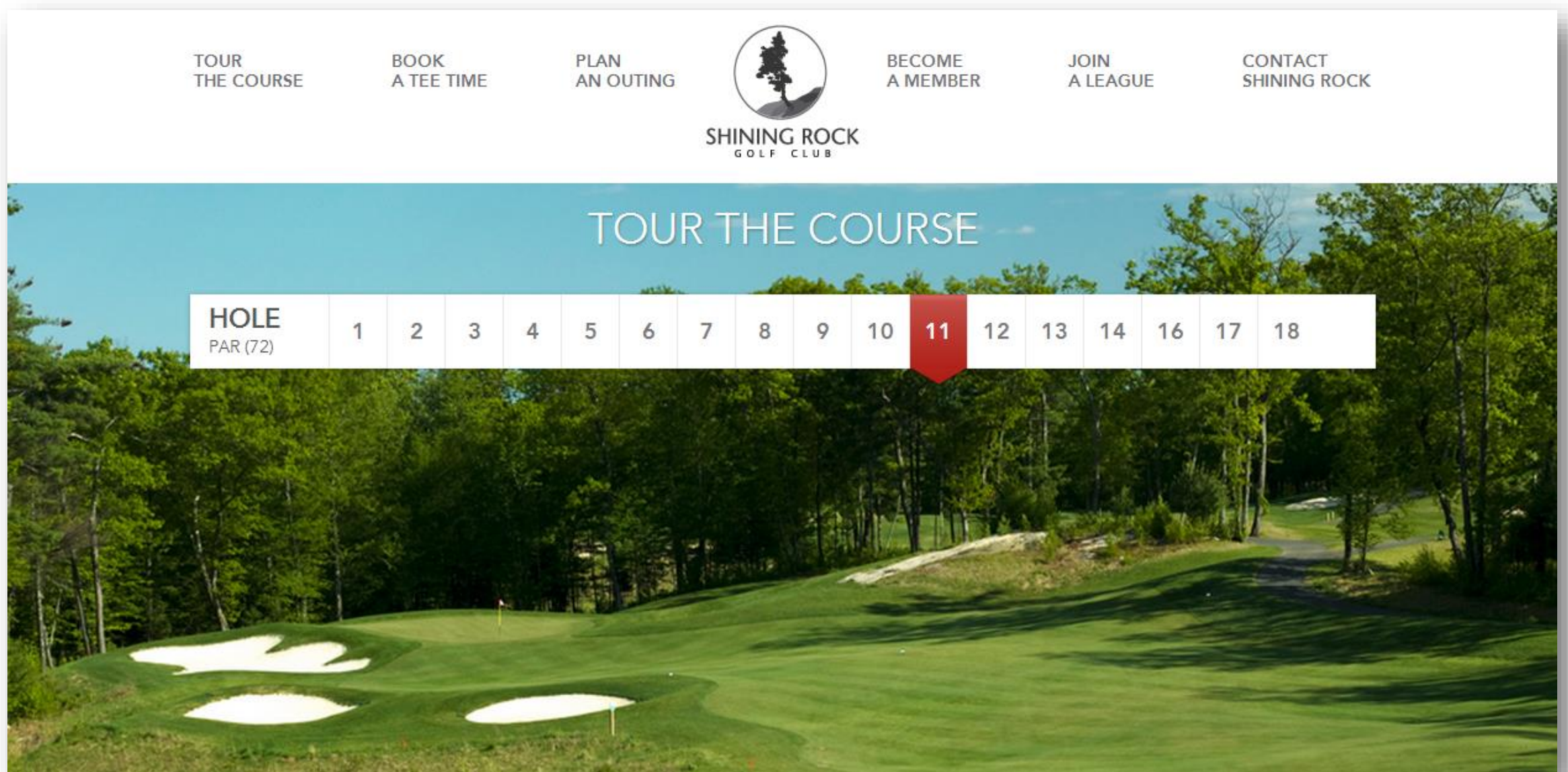
Since 1964 , all of us at Elmcrest have dedicated our time and energy to our members, our community, education, and the game of golf. We have worked hard to provide a venue that emphasizes a family atmosphere. Our motto, "A family that plays golf together stays together," is what drives us in our decision-making. Over the years our membership has grown from the first generation of players to the second generation of players, their children, and now includes the third generation of players, their grandchildren. Nothing makes us happier than to see these families play golf and enjoy themselves.

[Continued](#)

Would you want to join this semi-private golf course? Imagery, style and text-formatting all could be improved.



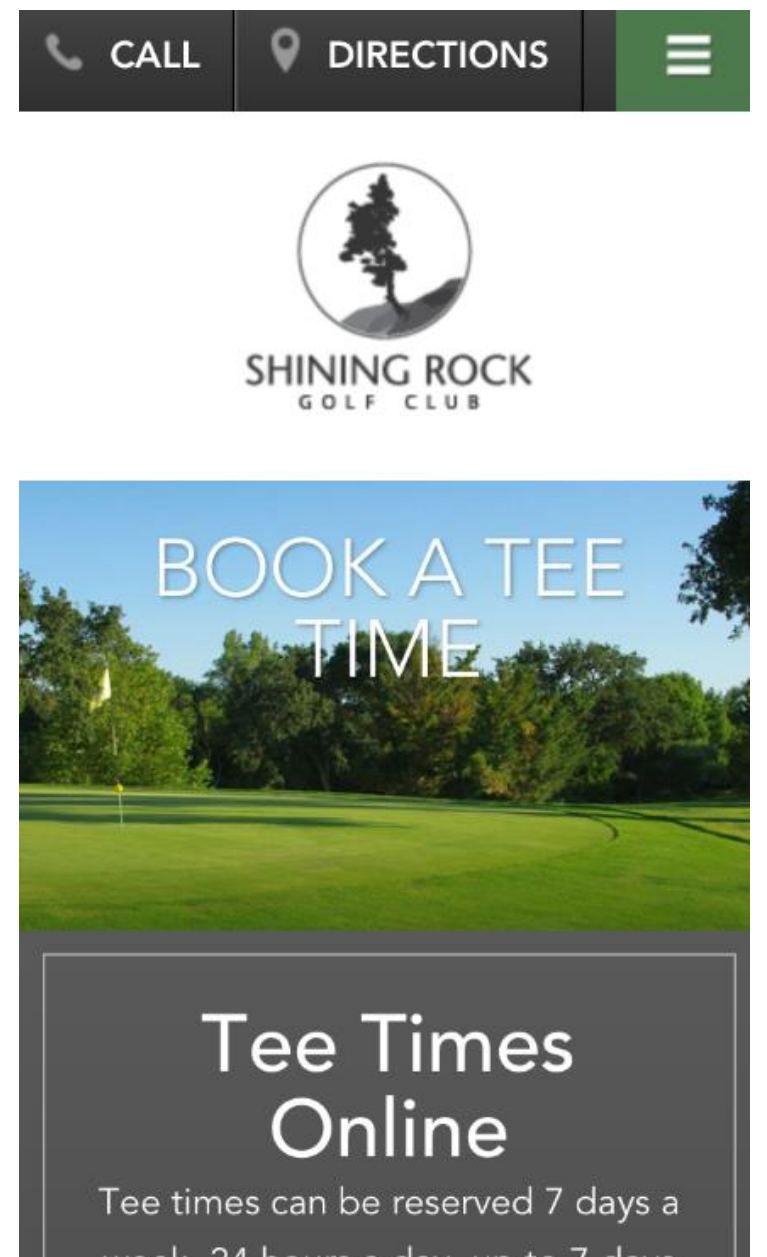
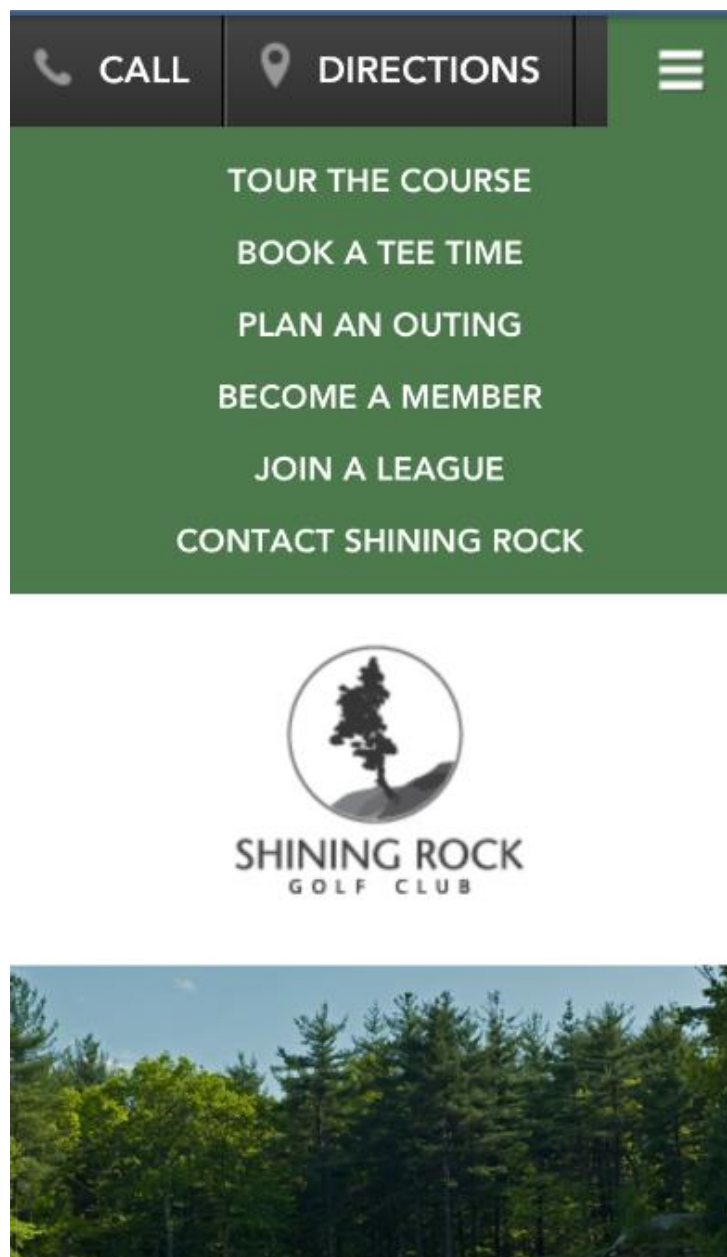
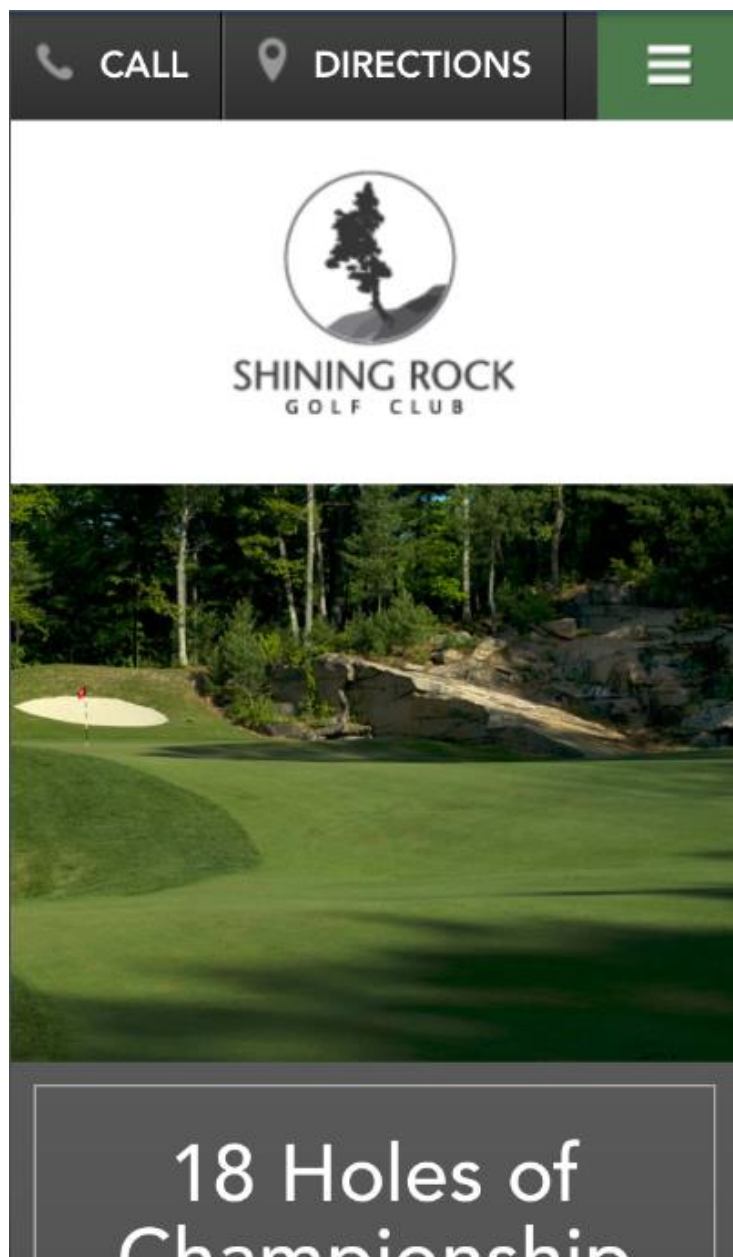
YOUR COURSE = YOUR PRODUCT. WOULD I BUY IT ONLINE?



This website is clean, simple, and visually appealing; however, improvements could be made. Stay tuned in 2014 as Nextgen will produce more detailed marketing guides catered toward golf course web design.



IS YOUR WEBSITE OPTIMIZED FOR MOBILE?



Shining Rock golf course looks differently on mobile devices. Their mobile-optimized site looks great and provides an easy experience for users to call the course, book tee times and get directions.



SMARTPHONE USAGE

US Smartphone User Penetration, by Age, 2011-2017

% of mobile phone users in each group

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
0-11	12.6%	15.9%	16.7%	18.0%	19.9%	22.0%	24.0%
12-17	35.1%	44.3%	50.9%	58.7%	67.4%	75.1%	82.9%
18-24	57.2%	66.8%	72.6%	79.4%	86.2%	92.1%	97.1%
25-34	59.8%	69.3%	75.9%	82.9%	88.9%	93.9%	96.2%
35-44	47.4%	61.7%	70.5%	80.5%	86.5%	92.5%	96.0%
45-54	31.1%	46.3%	55.8%	64.9%	73.8%	80.8%	87.8%
55-64	26.6%	41.9%	51.5%	60.6%	69.6%	76.6%	83.7%
65+	15.9%	21.3%	23.7%	26.4%	28.7%	30.9%	33.1%
Total	39.1%	50.1%	56.8%	63.8%	70.1%	75.3%	79.7%

Note: individuals who own at least one smartphone and use the smartphone(s) at least once per month

Source: eMarketer, March 2013; confirmed and republished, Aug 2013

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www.eMarketer.com

A 2014 Nextgengolf research study found 88% of 18–26 year old golfers checked their mobile phones multiple times per round.



4 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR WEBSITE IMMEDIATELY

1. Have great pictures

- If I'm a new potential customer and I'm on your site for the first time, would I play your course versus the other one down the street with a better website?

2. Show social media buttons

- Make sure the three key social network buttons are visibly accessible on your site. Read on to learn about what social networks you should focus on.

3. Start blogging

- Content is king. Golf courses that produce great content on a consistent basis with relevant keywords will appear on google searches above and before their competition.

4. Be simple, accurate & consistent

- Less is more. Make sure key information is presented consistently and in a simple way throughout the site.



Want more info? Keep a lookout for Nextgen marketing guides specifically geared toward websites, social media and blogging in 2014

WHO IS SEARCHING FOR YOU?

US Internet Users Who Click on Ads in Search Engines, by Age, Aug 2012

% of respondents



Source: The Search Agency, "2012 Online User Behavior and Engagement Study" conducted by Harris Interactive, Jan 9, 2013

149963

www.eMarketer.com

Paid search advertising through Google AdWords could be a good strategy for some courses. Search traffic growth can also be achieved by improving awareness and organic search rankings through Search Engine Optimization.



WHAT DOES GEN-Y VALUE?



- Cost
- Condition
- Service
- Amenities
- Pace of Play



GOLF COURSE COST PT. 1

Demographic Profile of US Mobile Phone Owners Who Use Their Devices to Compare Prices In-Store, Jan 2013

% of respondents in each group

Gender

Male	26%
Female	28%

Age

18-29	50%
30-49	32%
50-64	12%
65+	7%

Household income

<\$30K	24%
\$30K-\$50K	22%
\$50K-\$75K	32%
\$75K+	32%

Education level

High school grad or less	22%
Some college	30%
College+	32%

Total **27%**

*Note: *past 30 days; look up price of a product online while in a store to see if they could get a better price elsewhere*

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project, "In-Store Mobile Commerce During the 2012 Holiday Shopping Season," Jan 31, 2013

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www.eMarketer.com

In a 2014 survey, Nextgen found that 86% of 18–26 year old golfers said cost was one of the top 3 most important factors when choosing a golf course. Comparing prices via mobile is an important shopping tool for Gen–Y consumers.



GOLF COURSE COST PT. 2

Online CPG Shopping Behaviors of US Online Shoppers, by Age, Q4 2012

% of respondents in each group

	18-34	35-54	55+
Download coupons from couponing sites, such as SmartSource	55%	38%	21%
Download coupons from retailer websites	53%	40%	24%
Download coupons from manufacturer websites	53%	42%	25%
Download recipes off websites and other online sources	53%	45%	34%
Research products on websites	42%	31%	17%
Use social media sources (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) to get coupons	40%	22%	4%
Visit online deal sites, such as Woot and Groupon	38%	27%	12%
Look for updates from retailers/manufacturers via email/text message	25%	18%	9%
Research products on blogs	23%	11%	3%
Use social media sources (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) to research products	22%	12%	2%

Note: top-2 box on a 5-point scale

Source: SymphonyIRI, "MarketPulse Survey Q4 2012" as cited in "2012 CPG Year in Review: Finding the New Normal," Feb 20, 2013

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www.eMarketer.com

Gen-Y consumers are not cheap, rather, they are smart consumers. In a 2014 survey, Nextgen found that 66% of 18–26 year old golfers said they pay for golf out of their own pocket. Did you have the money for golf in college or during your entry-level job?



GOLF COURSE CONDITION



Nextgen found that 88% of 18–26 year old golfers consider course condition one of the top 3 most important factors when choosing a course. Although this is obvious, courses need to be upfront regarding aeration or poor course quality ahead of time to avoid negative online reviews and lost customers.



GOLF COURSE SERVICE



Nextgen found that 69% of 18–26 year old golfers said that they would like the PGA Professional to greet them and say hello.



Do you treat Gen-Y golfers differently than your core 40–65 year old clientele?

AMENITIES



Millennials have been called “the service generation.” Although 18–26 year old golfers expect a high level of service, expensive amenities and additions to your course will go overlooked by this generation. Focus on the personal service, not new course amenities.



PACE OF PLAY



Time is tight for these golfers and pace of play is important. 17% of 18–26 year old golfers said that course pace of play was one of the top 3 most important factors when choosing a course.



SOCIAL MEDIA



- Why use social media?
- The only 3 social networks that matter



SOCIAL MEDIA PT. 1

US Social Network User Penetration, by Age, 2012-2017

% of internet users in each group

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
0-11	16.0%	17.0%	17.8%	18.3%	18.6%	19.2%
12-17	84.0%	85.3%	86.5%	87.5%	88.3%	89.0%
18-24	92.0%	93.0%	94.0%	95.0%	96.0%	96.7%
25-34	84.0%	85.0%	86.0%	86.4%	86.4%	86.6%
35-44	75.0%	77.0%	79.0%	80.0%	81.0%	81.5%
45-54	63.0%	65.0%	67.2%	69.0%	70.0%	71.3%
55-64	55.0%	56.5%	57.0%	58.0%	59.0%	60.0%
65+	34.0%	36.0%	38.0%	40.0%	42.0%	44.6%
Total	66.2%	67.2%	68.1%	68.8%	69.4%	70.1%

Note: internet users who use social networks via any device at least once per month

Source: eMarketer, Feb 2013

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www.eMarketer.com

Are your core golf customers using social media? Golf courses that focus on building their social media presence now will reap benefits later.



SOCIAL MEDIA PT. 2

Social Networks on Which US Social Network Users* Have Accounts, by Demographic, Oct 2012

% of respondents in each group

	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter	Google+	LinkedIn	Pinterest	Instagram
Gender							
Female	95%	42%	37%	32%	20%	26%	15%
Male	90%	53%	39%	38%	30%	10%	12%
Age							
18-29	93%	74%	54%	46%	19%	24%	30%
30-49	92%	50%	42%	37%	29%	20%	13%
50+	92%	26%	23%	25%	26%	11%	2%
Total	92%	47%	38%	35%	25%	18%	14%

Note: n=1,986; *have at least one account on social media

Source: Performics and ROI Research, "Life on Demand Research Series 2012 Wave 2," Dec 11, 2012

149098

www.eMarketer.com

Have you heard of Vine or Snapchat? New technologies and social networks will continue to emerge, but courses should stay focused on core networks that are here to stay.



TWITTER, FACEBOOK & GOOGLE+



Nextgen found that 85% of golfers 18–26 said Facebook and Twitter were the most important social networks for golf. Google+ is growing in popularity and will help your awareness and rankings on google search in particular.



4 QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Does your course have a plan to reach the next generation?
2. How does your web and mobile technology stack up against other courses?
3. Do you and your staff treat younger consumers differently than your core members?
4. Do you have active profiles on twitter, facebook and google+?

Nextgengolf will be producing more detailed & FREE marketing guides throughout 2014 to help course owners and operators better market to the next generation of golfers.



CONCLUSIONS

1. The golf industry needs to embrace this generation rather than ignore it.
2. Golf courses taking steps to better their businesses for young consumers can create short-term revenue and long-term customers.
3. Social media is here to stay. Get on the three most powerful networks -- Facebook, Twitter, Google+ -- ASAP and stay tuned for our next guide on how to use them!
4. Cost is a concern for young adults. Courses that understand how to properly package and market young adult offerings via the appropriate social and media channels will gain more revenue.
5. If your course technology is not up to par, spend the money on fixing your website and mobile presence.



LET NEXTGENGOLF HELP

- Nextgengolf connects the golf industry to 18–29 year old consumers by providing products and services to meet the needs of the next generation of players. [Learn more](#)
- There is no cost to become a partner golf course of Nextgengolf. We can help your business through:
 1. Tournament revenue
 2. Daily play revenue
 3. Course consulting for Gen-Y

- Set-up your profile today, visit:
<http://nextgengolf.org/courses/owners/>

- Or contact me:

Kris Hart

413.237.2271

Kris@nextgengolf.org

@collegegolfguy

