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**Golf
Business
Canada**

National Golf Day

On Target For The Future



On May 29, 2018, on the front lawn of Parliament Hill, the kids were having the time of their lives driving, chipping, putting, hooting and hollering. The skies were clear blue and the early season warmth of the sun just added to the fun!

Inside Parliament, 20 Canadian golf industry leaders were meeting with dozens of MPs in their respective offices. The messages were centered on the many positive impacts that golf has in communities throughout the country and collectively for the good of society.

Across Canada, various golf stakeholders were adding their own local focus on National Golf Day. Some broadcasted the positive golf messaging provided. Some courses held special events to celebrate the great game of golf. Other stakeholders added their own promotional support.

Dozens of media outlets picked up on the story, interviewing various industry professionals and profiling Canadian golf's impressive success stories. Social media was buzzing as the celebration spread.

So, for a first year launch, the outcome of National Golf Day was clearly "mission accomplished." This inaugural success confirmed that it becomes an annual event each spring.



Jeff Calderwood, We Are Golf Chair, addresses the media in front of the Parliament Buildings.

All those who are involved in Canadian golf stand to greatly benefit from this ongoing initiative. From golfers to pros, suppliers to courses, associations to media, local events to the Opens, promoting golf's good news story will raise everyone's game.

NATIONAL GOLF DAY STRATEGY

National Golf Day was probably long overdue. We are perhaps the most misunderstood industry, held back by misconceptions and outdated public images. To the extent that a lot of the misconceptions are negative, this has been hurting golf participation, investment, environmental perceptions, funding support, spectator viewership, and government legislation towards the industry.

To be blunt, golf has had a branding problem. The facts about our sport are actually very positive but our image in the marketplace leans negative. In the absence of telling our good news story effectively, that image gap persists and we can't expect anyone other than those of us in the golf industry to fix the problem.

Recognizing these realities, NAGA stepped up to develop this National Golf Day strategy. The coalition of Golf Canada, National Golf Course Owners Association Canada, PGA of Canada, Canadian Golf Superintendents Association and Canadian Society of Club Managers invested in the design and execution of the event in close consultation with our golf industry leaders south of the border, where National Golf Day has already proven successful.

Jeff Calderwood, Chair of NAGA, explains "We began considering the concept in late 2016. From the initial interest, it takes a lot of coordinating to design the strategy, align all partner investments and execute the event itself. Each of these golf associations deserves a lot of credit. Budgets are tight and everyone is extremely busy but the importance of the National Golf Day strategy was embraced by all. It's a great example of cooperation across all sectors of the golf industry."

WE ARE GOLF: OBJECTIVES

NAGA also took the National Golf Day opportunity to rebrand itself to "We Are Golf" for a friendlier public-facing name and image. This also aligns with the American strategy where the We Are Golf brand also represents the umbrella group of golf's leading associations.



Jeff Calderwood, CEO, NGCOA Canada (far left); Michael Hatch, Sr. VP, Impact Public Affairs; and Rodger Cuzner, MP, Cape Breton-Canso.

Steve Mona, CEO of the World Golf Foundation commented, "It's great to have that consistency with We Are Golf across North America. Together with our alignment on National Golf Day, these are great steps forward as golf unites for the common goal of strengthening the future of our industry".

To accomplish the objectives of promoting golf's many positive benefits and establishing golf as a vital industry, not just a great game, three leading strategies were planned. A government relations campaign, a public relations plan, and a grassroots strategy for golf courses or other industry stakeholders to participate in.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS STRATEGY

The government relations strategy was the leading strategy for 2018 and will remain a high priority in future years. Legislators are very susceptible to the image problem of golf, meaning that they believe golf is just a game, and worse, just for the elite. In a politician's world, that translates directly to a perception that anything related to golf is frivolous and not voter friendly. As we are aware, they do make every decision based upon what they believe the voters will think.

As a result, golf tends to get no relief from unfair legislation; very little government funding compared to other sports, and is perceived to be an easy target for pending tax, environmental, labour or other pending regulatory interference. No doubt, your operation can relate to the detriment of businesses not permitted to take clients to the golf course, tougher employment standards, or the challenges of defending the necessity and professional application of pesticides.

FOCUSING ON PARLIAMENT HILL

National Golf Day being focused on Parliament Hill is critical to resolving these types of government challenges. So, We Are Golf booked the front lawn of Parliament for golf activities, a series of 30 minute MP meetings throughout the day, a reception in the beautiful Confederation Room, a media conference and a Parliamentary Breakfast Meeting.

It all went very well. The opening reception was well attended and provided a casual atmosphere for discussing golf's virtues over a glass of wine while MPs tested their skills on the putting green. Since they all have golf courses in their own ridings, the conversations are very friendly. Several commented how enjoyable it is to

have the golf industry come to Ottawa, given that most other industries doing similar government relations tend to be pretty dry discussions.

Of particular note, the Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Bardish Chagger, was very engaged with our golf delegates, as was the Speaker of the House, the Honourable Geoff Regan, and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, to name just a few.

The next morning, National Golf Day, started with the 7:30 AM Breakfast Meeting, featuring guest speaker MP Rodger Cuzner, Cape Breton-Canso. Mr. Cuzner is one of the longest standing Liberal MPs and a big advocate for golf, with Cabot Links/Cliffs and many other notable golf courses in his riding. One element of the Government Relations strategy is to identify and



"Being in a lower income school, our students do not usually have the opportunity to try a wide variety of sports. This year, thanks to Golf Canada, our students were able to experience a new sport that they perhaps would never have had the chance to try. Being exposed to different activities gives our students a chance to see their skills and talents shine. It was a wonderful day and a wonderful event for our students to attend at Parliament Hill."
Ms. Julie Hanna, Carson Grove Elementary School, Ottawa Grade 5 teacher



Laurence Applebaum, CEO, Golf Canada (left) with Catherine McKenna, MP, Ottawa Centre and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

build relationships with Champions who will work on behalf of golf within Parliament. MP Cuzner is now one of those.

Following the Breakfast Meeting, the team of twenty golf delegates split into groups of two or three and headed to their respective scheduled meetings with individual MPs. Those meetings occurred all day long and totaled approximately 40. A few additional MP meetings were added after hours to accommodate their busy schedules.

The key messages delivered at each of these meetings was scripted in advance and established why golf is the #1 participation sport in Canada, that golf generates greater economic impact than all other sports, that golf raises more money for charity than any other sport, that golf is the most environmentally positive development of land, the healthy fitness aspects of playing golf, and the tremendous diversity in Canadian golf today. Overwhelmingly, our delegates reported genuine appreciation by all MPs and commitments for supporting golf in the future.

PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY

Simultaneous to the more serious meetings inside Parliament, We Are Golf conducted National Golf Day activities on the front lawn. It isn't easy to reserve the Parliamentary front lawn for such an event but it was well worth it to have jumped through all the hoops in order to gain that access. Golf's public relations image scored a Hole-In-One here.

Although tourists and Parliamentarians were welcomed to participate, the main focus was on kids golf. Golf Canada and NGCOA Canada provided inflatable hitting cages, putting greens, plastic clubs, balls and target nets. Busloads of school kids arrived as planned, on organized class field trips. The PGA of Canada pros helped the enthusiastic juniors have the best field trip ever! Fun and youth were the resounding golf themes and with the multicultural schools that participated, golf's diversity was also showcased.



Board Member Perspective

It was an honour to be asked to participate in Canada's National Golf Day as a member of the We Are Golf delegation. I was especially excited to feel like I was part of moving the golf industry forward by joining my colleagues in presenting a united front to our politicians.

Our group met for an informational gathering before our day of meetings on the Hill to set our goals and ensure we approached the day with a common message. We were divided into teams that covered all the aspects of the game. My team consisted of myself, an owner/operator (NGCOA Canada), Greg Richardson, GM/COO of a private club (CSCM), and Laurence Applebaum, CEO of Golf Canada. I identify my team because I want to highlight the spirit of our mission which is to show that the golf industry is committed to work together to grow the game of golf.

An issue that has been weighing heavily on the golf industry since the 1970s is the fact that golf is an excluded business expense. Industry representatives have been working to get this inexplicable tax rule corrected for years but for this occasion the decision was made to change our tune.

Instead of continuing to hammer away at the tax issue, it was concluded that our most productive use of the meetings with the MPs would be to show all of the positive aspects of golf. We would identify the health benefits, that golf is the number one participation sport, the number of people golf employs, the diversity of the consumer the game attracts, and so on. This approach meant we didn't go into the meetings with a particular "ask" because we were really there to show that the golf industry is unified.

All of the MPs we met with listened intently and commented that they weren't aware of some of the statistics we presented. They said it was refreshing to be given information without a request. Then, to our surprise all of the MPs my team met with asked "how is that tax issue progressing?" This was a great reflection that the message that had been presented in previous meetings by our industry leaders was still on the radar.

As our team walked out of the meetings we all commented that we felt as though we had been listened to and that the MPs understood that we are working together to grow the game. We felt that we had accomplished our goal.

I hope that as the years progress, National Golf Day grows into a larger event with most golf courses promoting the day. I am confident that with the spirit of unity I felt among the delegates in Ottawa, that this is only the beginning of what We Are Golf can do to promote our sport and industry.

Lesley McMahon
Owner/Operator, Balmoral Golf Course, AB
Vice President, NGCOA Canada
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Posters and an example of one of the many shareables produced to promote We Are Golf.

tweets live from Parliament Hill, golf's public relations strategy got a wonderful boost from these grassroots communications.

In addition, some golf courses took the initiative to coordinate special events on National Golf Day, further contributing to the celebration of golf and the intended public relations strategy. Watch for more of this next year when We Are Golf actually proposes such participation.

Other stakeholders undertook similar proactive support, such as Golf Town offering free sleeves of golf balls to all who brought in scorecards played on National Golf Day. Golf Town management reported that all their stores across Canada ran out of the golf balls allocated to this promotion.



Quotes from the Grade 4 and 5 students of St. Michael School, Ottawa

"It was really fun! Awesome, cool, amazing, great, exciting, fantastic..."

"I liked the putting! It inspires me to play golf!"

"I had fun learning about chipping. Golf is a unique and fun sport to play."

"I learned new things."

"We enjoyed all of it, from the prizes, to the location (many of us have never been to Parliament Hill) "

"We learned new skills. The people that taught us were nice. It was fun!"

At 10:30 AM, Jeff Calderwood and Laurence Applebaum, Golf Canada CEO, conducted a media conference on a stage set among all the front lawn action and kids fun. Once again, golf's key messages were presented, this time for public consumption, and numerous media then picked up on the National Golf Day theme.

There was tremendous social media buzz all day long and, over the following week, dozens of follow up media interviews were requested, enabling further broadcast of golf's good news story. Many of those kids became young TV stars on CBC's national news coverage of the media conference!

GRASSROOTS STRATEGY

The third component of National Golf Day was the grassroots engagement. Although this was only intended to be very soft support in Year 1, to be ramped up in future years as budgets and experience accrued, the activity on May 29 surpassed all expectations.

We Are Golf had sent out social media shareables to the memberships of each association and to related stakeholders, with the various key message bites included. Digital posters were also provided. The result was social media action that was so much better than anticipated! Between the shareables provided in advance and additional



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British Columbia Golf President Patrick Kelly (left) with the Speaker of the House, the Honourable Geoff Regan, MP, Halifax West.

KEY MESSAGES

The good news story that golf is able to tell is impressive. Whether it's to politicians, the media, the public, or even to other golf industry colleagues, all are usually surprised to hear how developed the Canadian golf industry actually is and all the aspects where Canadian golf is #1.

Here is a summary of golf's winning scorecard, and the key messages that National Golf Day presented:

- **#1 Participation Sport:** More Canadians play golf every year than any other sport. Its diversity appeals to 5.7 million Canadians who played 64 million rounds this past year. Golf appeals to male and female, all ages, and multicultural demographics.
- **#1 In The World:** Canada's 19% golf participation rate is higher than all other countries, by far. It is nearly double the USA rate and 3 to 40 times the rate of European countries.
- **#1 Economic Impact:** Canada's golf industry generates more GDP than all other participation sports, \$14.3 billion direct, \$37 billion total.
- **#1 Employment:** Canadian golf employs more than all other sports, 126,000 direct; 300,000 total.

- **#1 Charitable Fundraising:** More funds raised for charity than any other sport, average of \$533 million per year.
- **#1 Tax Revenue:** Canada's golf industry generates more tax revenue than all other participation sports, \$3.6 billion per year.
- **#1 Environmental Stewardship:** Golf is the most environmentally positive development of raw land and most valuable preservation of greenspace. 175,000 hectares of managed; 30,000 hectares of unmanaged wildlife habitat.
- **Driving Tourism:** Dedicated golf travel contributes over \$4 billion per year to Canadian tourism, \$2.5 billion domestic travel and \$1.6 billion foreign visitor golf.
- **Accessibility:** Canada has over 2300 golf courses, in all regions, with a higher proportion open to public play than other countries, ranging from very inexpensive to high end and from beginner friendly to challenging.
- **Golf Fitness Benefits:** Walking 18 holes burns up to 2,000 calories, 10,000 steps, 8 km walk. Golf for fitness is a very healthy recreational activity, important and accessible to all ages.
- **Youth Benefits:** Golf provides valuable life skills to kids, teaching discipline, integrity, honesty, achievement, healthy recreation, an important relief from their screens, no concussions; 37% of all golf employees are also youth.

FUTURE PLANS FOR NATIONAL GOLF DAY

Building from the successful launch of the 2018 National Golf Day, We Are Golf intends to conduct the event annually and to increase the profile each year.

Dates will fluctuate slightly depending upon when Parliament is sitting, dates that align with Tuesday are preferred, avoiding long weekend timing and Masters and PGA schedules. The month of May will be the target. Discussions with We Are Golf in the USA about coordinating the same date for both countries are ongoing but may or may not be possible due to some unique timing considerations.



"The kids loved the day and were very excited when I told them we have golf equipment at school to continue playing! We look forward to maybe having someone come to school in the fall to show all of the students some golf tips.

Our school is one of few children support schools in the Ottawa Catholic School Board. As such, most of our students are not given the opportunity to participate in many events. I was so happy to be able to take advantage of this opportunity for the kids and so excited to be able to attend myself.

Thank you so much for a wonderful day and for giving our students the opportunity to try something new!"
Ms. Cathi Dawson-Hills,
St. Michael School, Ottawa
Grade 4-5 Teacher



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NGCOA Canada is represented by CEO Jeff Calderwood (far left); Vice President Lesley McMahon, Balmoral Golf Course; Quebec Chapter President Daniel Pilon, Les clubs de golf Banlieue-Ouest; and President Steven Spratt, Falcon Ridge Golf Club.



Quotes from the Grade 5 students of Carson Grove Elementary School, Ottawa

"It's a great outdoor activity!" - Rebecca

"It is very fun and I can't wait to try it again!" - Shivam

"I've never tried golf until this year and I would definitely like to try it again soon. Thanks Golf Canada for a great opportunity!" - Samantha

"Although I've never played before, this time I had a chance and it was more wonderful than I thought it would be. Thank you for the great time at Parliament Hill, the hat, and the green sunglasses!" - Grace

Introducing parallel National Golf Day events at Canada's provincial legislatures will also be proposed. The government relations objectives are equally important provincially and a collective strategy to maximize the public relations strategy is wise. Allied golf association leadership at the provincial levels is encouraged.

The grassroots strategy has considerable upside potential. Without structuring a set program for golf courses and other stakeholders to engage in, We Are Golf intends to suggest a menu of example options that could be executed. In many cases, these strategies could also drive incremental revenues on National Golf Day, as well as celebrating all of golf's key messages.

Future releases of Canadian golf's Economic Impact Study will be planned to coincide with National Golf Day for maximum profile. 2019 is under consideration for the next release. Other similar golf industry announcements may also be included in National Golf Day messaging.

We Are Golf will also reach for the addition of celebrity spokespeople who are relevant to the Canadian golf industry. An appearance by Brooke Henderson if she were interested and available, for

example, would bolster the profile of National Golf Day and represent the true image of Canadian golf.

As the profile of National Golf Day gains traction and broader relationships with Champions are developed, the expectation is that We Are Golf will leverage that positioning to proactively prevent governments from implementing unfair legislative decisions and to undo existing unfairness. That can only succeed once golf is treated as the important industry that it is, and not just as a game for the elite few.

As Laurence Applebaum, Golf Canada CEO, noted following the May 29 National Golf Day, "The day was fantastic and has the opportunity to become an important annual event that the entire Canadian golf industry can rally behind, for the long-term growth of our sport. There are so many meaningful contributions connected to golf, and National Golf Day provides a tremendous platform to share the incredible economic, health, tourism, environmental, and charitable impact of golf in communities from coast to coast."

We Are Golf thanks all participating golf industry stakeholders for contributing to the successful launch of the 2018 National Golf Day.



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