



Getting linked together

One of the main goals of the EGCOA is to facilitate networking for owners and managers of golf courses. Social media outlets such as LinkedIn can be highly effective tools to realise this as **Tibbe Bakker** describes.

■ With more than 35 million registered users, LinkedIn has become an exceptional tool for business-oriented networking. LinkedIn is a network of professionals from around the world, representing 170 industries and 200 countries.

You can find, be introduced to, and collaborate with qualified professionals that you need to work with to accomplish your goals. For example, executives from all Fortune 500 companies are LinkedIn members. The millions of professionals from all different businesses use LinkedIn to exchange information, ideas and opportunities.

Getting started is quite simple: surf to www.linkedin.com and create a personal profile. This is more or less the same as your curriculum vitae: a professional identity online.

A LinkedIn profile sums up your education and working experiences, with the possibility to add your main responsibilities of your current job, a description of projects that you are involved in or results that you have established. To utilise your LinkedIn profile, it is best to explain what your company stands for.

What services or products do you offer to other LinkedIn users? What distinguishes you from others? If you see your profile from this point of view, it can be a

effective and free way to market your company or in this case, your golf course. It is even possible to add slide shows to your profile, which further enables the possibility to show people what you have to offer.

Once you have created a profile, join the EGCOA LinkedIn Group. Hundreds of golf course owners, golf managers and suppliers already have a LinkedIn profile and with the goal of bringing the European golf business together in mind, the EGCOA has recently launched a so called 'group' on LinkedIn.

A LinkedIn group is a gathering of like minded users, mostly from the same business or organisation. Groups are more or less like traditional Internet forums, and are used widely to discuss topics of mutual concern in various businesses.

The big advantage of LinkedIn is that you don't have to visit the website to stay up-to-date; a brief summary of news and discussions will be delivered in your e-mail inbox once a week.

It is easy to become a member of the EGCOA LinkedIn Group. Once you are a member of the group, there are three main features to be used.

The first is the possibility to ask questions and participate in discussions. In the EGCOA group, you can ask any question

about managing your golf course, maintenance, suppliers, etc. Your fellow colleagues around Europe will help you out.

As a member of the group, it is possible to see all questions and given answers from other members. Members can utilise LinkedIn to discuss a myriad of topics; to search for new employees, choosing the right software system for your business, dealing with the organisation of tournaments, food and beverage ideas, emergency procedures and no-show policies.

These are just a sampling of the topics. In the EGCOA group, recent discussions focused on the effect of the credit crunch for the European golf business and suggestions for the European Golf Business Conference 2009, that will take place in Amsterdam between December 2-4, 2009.

The second feature is the possibility to send messages and contact other golf course owners and managers. Once a member of the EGCOA LinkedIn group, you can view all profiles from other members. Most members include contact details in their profile.

The third feature enables users to post jobs and vacancies, but also to look for new staff. A LinkedIn group is an excellent medium to recruit new people for your course.

Once you've found a suitable person, take a look at their profile to get to know him or her.

Suppliers and companies in the golf business are also welcome to join the EGCOA Group. The EGCOA Corporate Membership enables this.

Although it is not allowed to spread commercial messages, the Corporate Membership is a very effective way to stay informed about the issues and problems that golf course owners have to deal with on a daily basis.

Next to this entrance to the EGCOA LinkedIn Group, a Corporate Member has the same package of benefits that normal EGCOA members have, including subscriptions to important golf business magazines such as *Golf Management Europe*, member rate to participate in the European Golf Business Conference and membership of the American NCGOA.

The number of members in the EGCOA LinkedIn group, and thus its effectiveness, grows every week.

For more information on LinkedIn, these are some useful websites to visit including www.linkedinintelligence.com, www.imonlinkedinnowwhat.com and www.linkedinintuition.com.

If you need support to join the EGCOA LinkedIn group, contact Tibbe Bakker at tb@egcoa.eu. **GME**



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