



INCLUSION GUIDELINES

FOR GOLF FACILITIES

/// TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
THE ASSESSMENT	4
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS	5
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
OUTSIDE	13
INSIDE	19
POLICIES AND PRACTICES	23
WELCOMING STAFF	31



After visiting nearly 100 golf courses across the United States, both public and private, I was inspired to write this document. There are so many facets that help make golf feel welcoming and inclusive. Capturing a feeling is hard, but as they say, you know it when you feel it.

When was the first time you truly felt invited and welcomed? Was it in a classroom, a friend's home, a meeting, at work, or on the golf course? What was it that made you feel invited and welcomed and do you still remember how you felt? That unmistakable, authentic feeling of being genuinely welcomed is the spark that ignites the flame, that makes the experience of playing golf so special.



Everyone has a story about their first experience playing golf. This is my story. I had a huge crush on a guy that I didn't think even noticed me. I would see him across my college campus and just melt. Then one day he approached me and asked me my name. Shortly thereafter, one of our college professors invited us to play golf with him and another professor. I was thrilled, not so much about golf, but at the opportunity to be near my crush. I eagerly said 'yes' and admitted that I had never played golf even though I had attended a private high school on the grounds of a beautiful country club. I have a competitive nature and had already conceded in my mind that I wouldn't win the first time out, but thinking about him teaching me the game, and helping me with my swing, gave me butterflies.

When I got to the golf course, I was surprised that in this predominately African American town of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the staff was primarily white. From the minute I approached the facility with my borrowed golf clubs and trepidation written all over my face, they made me feel special. I was warmly welcomed by everyone from the young man at check in, to the gentleman in the golf shop and the staff in restaurant.

All fears aside, as it turned out, I finished second, right behind my professor. I did so well that they didn't believe it was my first time playing. And yes, I fell in love right then and there, not with the guy, but with the game. And by the way, my next time out on the course I proved that my first time was just a fluke. I was horrible. I still cringe when I hear, "just pick up your ball." Since then, each time I hit the course I try to do better than the last time. What a warm and welcoming first-time experience!

We all want every single person who picks up a golf club to have an incredibly welcoming experience, including women, people of color, individuals with disabilities, LGBTQ's, seniors and youth. Golf is about the experience. You and your staff may be a part of the story a person tells years later about their first time playing golf. We are all familiar with the most common reasons people cite for not playing golf – time, cost and intimidation. While those can be real barriers to participation, often times the biggest barrier is an unwelcoming environment. Ask yourself, what is the facility's culture? Retailers who create authentically welcoming environments and experiences that are tailored to meet the individual needs of today's consumer should win every time.

These Inclusion Guidelines are designed to assist you in taking a closer look at what you might be missing at your golf facility. There are four areas of focus, Marketing & Communications, Physical Environment, Policies and Practices and a Welcoming Staff. The areas are explored through the eyes of rookies, as well as industry veterans to assist you in evolving and enhancing the environment and experiences you offer at your facility. Walk through each area of the guidelines and the respective assessment questions with your team using a lens of diversity and inclusion. Be honest in your findings and have candid conversations about them. What best practices did you see? What did you hear? How might individuals from backgrounds that are different than yours feel? What's working well? What needs to evolve or change as you move your operations and programming to a more inclusive place? How can your facility be the example of best practices in each category? These are the days of the 'consumer experience'. Let's make playing the game of golf the best experience ever! - Linnet E. Carty



TIME

Please carve out enough time with your staff to complete each of the four sections without rushing.

ANSWERS

Be explicit with your answers, and write detailed notes to share with your team members afterward.

DIVERSITY LENS

By diversity and inclusion lens, we mean a lens that is reflective of the diversity of the United States and a lens of inclusion where those diverse individuals feel welcomed and included. Please try to view each question from multiple diverse perspectives, from the eyes of someone who doesn't look like you or come from a similar background as yours. For example, if you are a straight, white able-bodied male, ask yourself if your answer would be the same if you were a person of color, a woman, a person with a disability, a member of the LGBTQ community, a Veteran or if English was your second language.

FEEDBACK

Be open and honest when sharing your results. Ask and answer questions with your team.

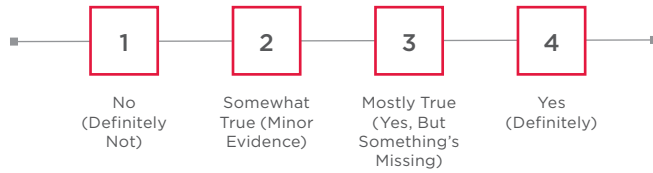
IMPROVEMENTS

List all the areas in need of improvement and begin with those that are easiest to implement and may be cost free - and then progress to those that may take more time, discussion and expense to improve your facility, and make it more welcoming for all.

In this section, you will review your facility's marketing and communications across all mediums - print, digital and social media. Language creates culture, and your facility's marketing and communications is the first touch point between the facility, members, and guests. As you review the promotional materials, be sure to apply a lens of inclusion, to help ensure they will resonate with all customers and potential customers.



Rate each question as follows:



1. Are all materials clear, concise and understandable?
Have you had non-golfers and non-staff members review them?

☐

2. Do the materials use fonts and a literacy level that are visually easy to read and easy to understand?

☐

3. Are there materials promoting engagement across different generations?

☐

4. Are there materials promoting engagement across genders?

☐

Rate each question as follows:



5. Is there information and incentives on bringing new people to the facility?

☐

6. Is there any evidence of community collaboration, such as outreach to the LGBTQ community, individuals with disabilities, people of color, multicultural, religious or social groups?

☐

7. Do you host unique events geared towards diverse populations, such as women, people of color, individuals with disabilities, Veterans, and English language learners?

☐

8. Have you hosted a special event led by a local celebrity from a unique and diverse background or women who are sportscasters, radio disc jockeys or newscasters to attract new communities?

☐

Rate each question as follows:

1	2	3	4
No (Definitely Not)	Somewhat True (Minor Evidence)	Mostly True (Yes, But Something's Missing)	Yes (Definitely)

9. Have you reached out to local Sororities and Fraternities to invite in diverse communities?

☐

10. Do photographs and articles in your marketing and communication vehicles reflect the diversity of the United States? Please see the example ad below.

☐



Rate each question as follows:

1	2	3	4
No (Definitely Not)	Somewhat True (Minor Evidence)	Mostly True (Yes, But Something's Missing)	Yes (Definitely)

11. Do you see imagery and stories about women from all backgrounds?

☐

12. Do you see imagery and stories about people of color?

☐

13. Do you see imagery and stories about the LGBTQ community and families?

☐

14. Do you see imagery and stories about individuals with disabilities?

☐

Rate each question as follows:



15. Do you see imagery and stories about youth and seniors?

☐

16. Do you see imagery and stories about families?

☐

17. Do you see imagery and stories about same sex couples?

☐

18. Do you see imagery and stories about staff members?

☐

Rate each question as follows:



19. Are new members and first-time golfers highlighted across your marketing and communication vehicles?

☐

20. Are all abbreviations explained?

☐



1 2 3 4

No (Definitely Not) Somewhat True (Minor Evidence) Mostly True (Yes, But Something's Missing) Yes (Definitely)

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Rate each question as follows:



1. Are there visible and clearly stated directions as you enter the facility's grounds for all types of parking and drop off (e.g. member, guest, accessible, motor coaches, etc.)?

☐

2. Are there visible and clearly stated directions to the facility's entrance for check-in and are they posted at or near the front entrance and all other entrances?

☐

3. Is there a welcome sign displayed at or near the entrance?

☐

4. Does the facility signage incorporate more than one language?

☐

Rate each question as follows:



5. Are the facility's hours of operation posted at or near the front entrance and all other entrances?

☐

6. Are the accessible only entrances clearly marked and fully accessible?

☐

7. Is there a map of the facility available near the front entrance?

☐

8. Does the course have language that is inclusive, for example forward tees as opposed to women's tees?

☐

Rate each question as follows:



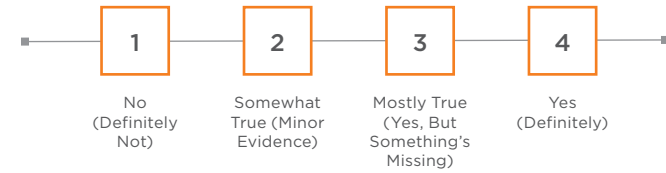
9. Is there appropriate signage on the golf course, such as directional signage that guides golfers to the next hole and to the practice facility?

10. Is there appropriate signage that guides golfers to the lesson tee, restrooms and water?



16 / INCLUSION GUIDELINES _____

Rate each question as follows:



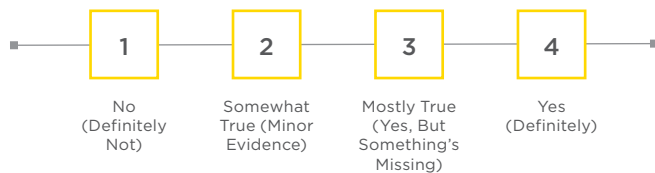
- Is the course set up to fit the full spectrum of driving distances and swing speeds, allowing each golfer to score well and feel like a “real” golfer?

NOTES

[illegible]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT - OUTSIDE / 17

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT - INSIDE



1. Is there a map available inside the facility and/or displayed near the main entrance and other public entrances that highlights frequently requested locations?

☐

2. Is there signage and/or digital displays announcing news, upcoming events and programs?

☐

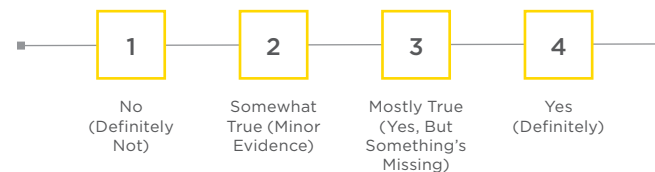
3. Are there photos of staff, members, guests, all genders, people of color, individuals with disabilities, same sex couples, and multiple generations on promotional materials?

☐

4. Do the imagery and displays throughout the facility reflect individuals from all backgrounds?

☐

Rate each question as follows:



5. Is there information geared towards youth and families, and does it include photos of women, people of color, individuals with disabilities, same sex families, seniors and youth?

☐

6. Is there specific outreach geared towards women's events?

☐

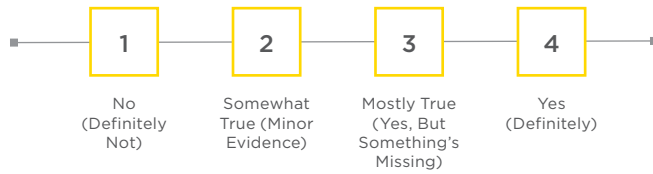
7. Is there specific outreach geared towards those in the LGBTQ community and individuals with disabilities?

☐

8. Is there specific outreach geared towards seniors and youth?

☐

Rate each question as follows:



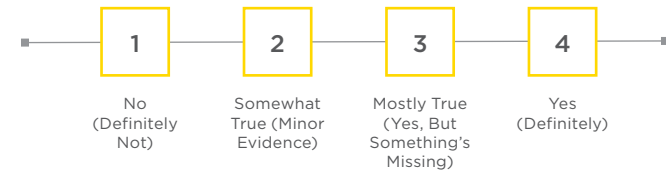
- 9.** Are all areas of the facility ADA compliant?

10. Is the merchandise offering in the golf shop engaging across genders, races, ethnicities and generations?



20 / INCLUSION GUIDELINES

Rate each question as follows:



11. Are the restrooms actively monitored for cleanliness?
Is there an All Gender Restroom and a Family Restroom,
both with diaper changing tables?

12. Is the signage around the club gender neutral or are there gendered signs like, 'the Men's Grill'?

NOTES

[illegible]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT - INSIDE / 21

POLICIES & PRACTICES

Your facility's policies and practices can enhance or undermine a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Conduct a comprehensive review of all policies and practices, especially those that are disseminated to or have a downstream impact on the public. If you're not already privy to all policies and practices, reach out to senior leadership at the facility and request access to them.



Rate each question as follows:



1. Is an orientation provided for every new customer?
Are orientations held at times and in locations that suit a variety of customer needs?
☐ _____

2. Is a tailored orientation provided for women and families?
☐ _____

3. Do you have specific information available to visitors, new members and families that includes tee times, events, instructional programs, costs, etc.?
☐ _____

4. Is the information about tee times, events, instruction, costs, etc. located on the website? A brochure? Given in person during an introductory session?
☐ _____

Rate each question as follows:



5. Does your family membership include same sex couples, guardians, grandparents and multigenerational households?

☐

6. How does staff most often engage with members, visitors, and families? Is it by phone, web or in-person? If they engage mostly in-person, are there written materials that are given with information about tee times, events, instruction programs, etc.?

☐

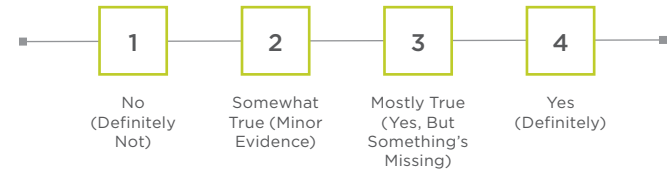
7. Are there any special accommodations set up for those with limited schedules due to work, like off-peak tee times, speed rounds, etc.?

☐

8. If you have youth programming, how are the expectations about what students should be learning in each level communicated to families? Is it in-person, by phone or email? Does anyone communicate in another language?

☐

Rate each question as follows:



9. What kind of informal social occasions, including off-site events, are offered so that members and newcomers can get to know each other and staff members? Are these events targeting and resonating with women, people of color, individuals with disabilities and the LGBTQ community and the younger generation?

☐

10. How does the facility utilize alternative communication methods, such as with members or newcomers who are English language learners or parents with disabilities, helping them to understand, especially when it comes to their family's participation?

☐

11. Is there an established and well-publicized protocol for anyone to communicate concerns around inclusion, bias, discrimination and the like without fear of retaliation or retribution?

☐

12. Are staff members engaged in regular professional development opportunities to learn about culturally responsive approaches to authentically engaging all customers?

☐

Rate each question as follows:

1 2 3 4

No (Definitely Not) Somewhat True (Minor Evidence) Mostly True (Yes, But Something's Missing) Yes (Definitely)

13. How many formats are used to disseminate information about programming and events, like the web, flyers, ads, emails and in-person?

14. Is there a calendar of events posted for everyone to view? Do the pictures on the event information reflect a multicultural demographic, and is it in more than one language?



Rate each question as follows:

1 2 3 4

No (Definitely Not) Somewhat True (Minor Evidence) Mostly True (Yes, But Something's Missing) Yes (Definitely)

15. Is event information provided in other languages, such as Spanish, Chinese and Japanese?

16. Does your staff validate use of the forward tees and respectfully encourage play that matches ability and distance?

17. Are there any efforts to engage communities that are often underrepresented in golf, such as people of color, women, the LGBTQ community, Veterans and individuals with disabilities?

18. Do you have meaningful and active connections with local social groups, schools, churches, Sororities and Fraternities, diverse chambers of commerce, and civic organizations for recruitment?

Rate each question as follows:



19. Do you regularly deploy surveys to gather member and guest feedback, and how often do you review the feedback?

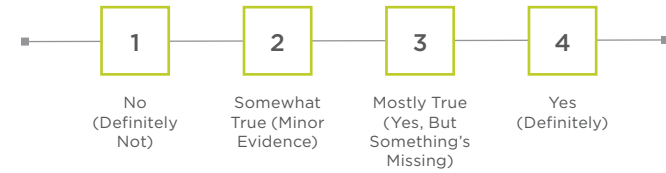
- 20.** Do you include local and diverse-owned suppliers in your procurement opportunities to help ensure minority-, women-, LGBTQ-, disabled- and Veteran-owned businesses are benefiting from the economics of golf?

- 21.** When recruiting new staff do you use blind resume reviews to help ensure equity in the process?

- 22.** When hiring new staff, do you incorporate panel-style interviews to gather multiple perspectives on candidate selection?

28 / INCLUSION GUIDELINES

Rate each question as follows:



- 23.** Have you structured the same interview questions for each candidate to ensure equitable evaluations?

NOTES

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POLICIES & PRACTICES / 29

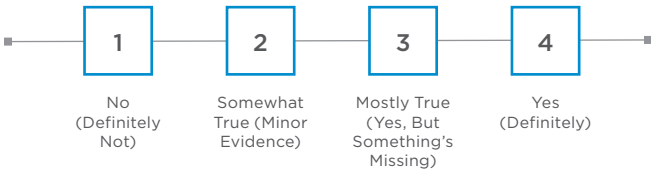
WELCOMING STAFF

This section will review welcoming staff. The attitudes of your staff members are an essential element in creating a welcoming atmosphere. Each person who interacts with your staff members should be treated the way you would like to be treated, regardless of their age, gender identity, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, ability or background.

Your team will quietly observe the behaviors of staff across the operations, including phone etiquette and interactions between staff, members, and visitors. To answer questions 2-5, one team member may call the facility asking for information or stage being upset.



Rate each question as follows:



1. Does the staff greet all members and guests with the same sense of urgency, a smile, and in a friendly, courteous way, as if they were greeting their best friend or own family member?

☐

2. Does the staff answer the telephone in a friendly and professional way? Are they patient with those who are less proficient with the English language or have difficulty hearing?

☐

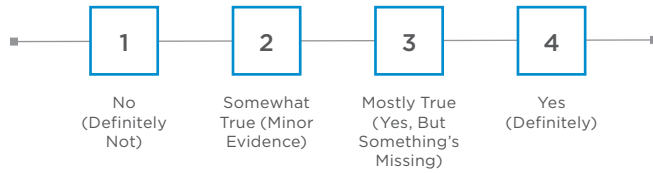
3. Is prompt attention given to all telephone calls and interactions, inviting two-way communication?

☐

4. If an upset member or guest contacts the facility, is the staff responding in a calm, attentive and professional manner to resolve the problem or find someone who can?

☐

Rate each question as follows:



5. Are all prospective customers who are seeking information and resources given up-to-date information and directed to supporting resources in a welcoming manner?

☐

6. In terms of your facility's culture, does the staff across inside and outside operations consistently greet and interact with everyone from all backgrounds in a warm, friendly, and courteous way?

☐

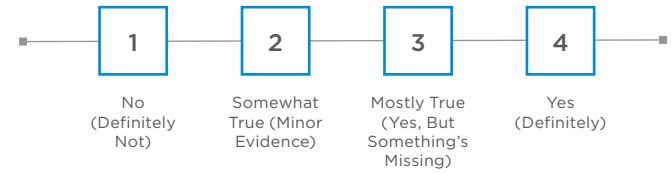
7. Is there a visible and accessible suggestion box(es) where everyone can contribute ideas? Have you considered anonymously publishing the questions and your responses?

☐

8. Do staff members passing in the hall acknowledge each other and guests with a smile, a nod or a hello?

☐

Rate each question as follows:



9. Do staff members know how to address inappropriate language or behavior and feel confident in doing so?

☐

10. Is all confidential information addressed in an area where others cannot overhear?

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