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## RiverCrest Golf Club and Preserve attributes higher event attendance to new website solution

### Background:

RiverCrest Golf Club & Preserve, near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, recently undertook the task of creating a new website for its members. With the implementation of the website, the club decided to offer online reservations for its golf and dining facilities. Previously, club administrators and members used four different web systems for tee time reservations, a la carte dining reservations, event registration, and viewing of member statements, each with its own login requirements, making a single system a welcome change. A seamless combination of all of these systems would help RiverCrest’s online presence appeal more to its members and lead to better communication throughout the club.

After a full review of all available options, RiverCrest administrators decided to install a Clubessential website for several reasons, the most important of which was the tangible value that could be extracted from Clubessential’s online reservations systems. By providing a uniform embedded reservations platform for special events, tee times and a la carte dining under the umbrella of a single user name and password, RiverCrest knew that it could quickly realize high levels of member adoption. With high member adoption, RiverCrest could capture even more value by cross-promoting club events and activities on these high-traffic pages. Prior to the installation of the new system, all reservations solutions were provided by third parties and members would be redirected away from the website, where cross-promotion wasn’t possible.

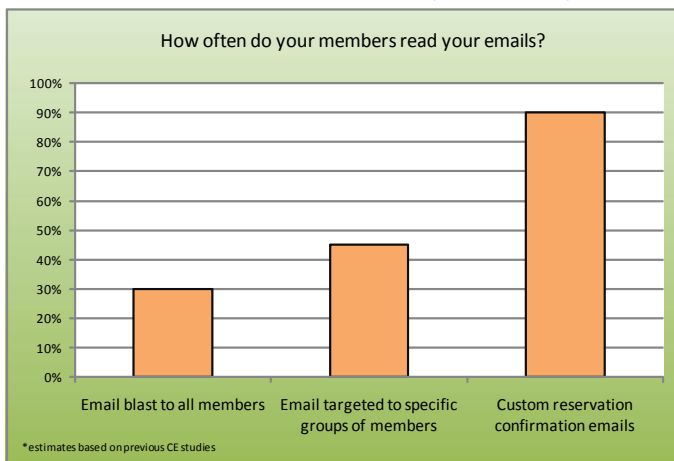
*“We put our Margaritaville event in late August on the website in June. It sold out to 265 members two weeks before the event. It did not sell out last year. Over 450 people will attend this year.”*

### Preparation:

Marketing Production and IT Operations Manager, Jeremy Lejeune, stated, “We felt comfortable that it would be a total success from a member standpoint. They had already adapted to 4 different sites. But quietly, we were more looking forward

to the ease on our end in which to manage our reservations, tee times and correspondence. The initial development stages working with the designers and project implementers set the tone for us. The transition went as planned and every obstacle, small and large, was handled quite efficiently between RCGC and Clubessential.”

To ensure efficient member adoption, RiverCrest used a multi-channel communication approach. The Club sent out an email to its membership containing information about the new applications, links to a Clubessential tutorial, and tips for making reservations. The club also promoted the new online presence in the monthly newsletters leading up to the launch. This multi-media approach gave members the information they needed to be successful using the new systems by providing information and instructions for basic use of the applications.



**The Results:**

When the club's new website was launched, several departments immediately noticed a change for the better. In the first month after the new systems were presented to members, over 72% of all tee times were booked by members online. After 5 months, this number rose to over 81%. It is important to note that this member convenience in no way takes away from the quality of the member experience of the club. Quite the contrary, members enjoy the convenience of being able to book reservations at home 24 hours a day, and club staff have more time to add a personal touch for every member at the clubhouse.

The golf shop was not the only area of operations affected by the high level of website traffic. Because administrators could now place promotional text, images, and links to sign up for club events on all reservations pages as well as in confirmation emails, event registration skyrocketed. Lejeune described one example of success he quickly recalled: "We put our signature Margaritaville event in late August on the site in June. It sold out to 265 members two weeks before the event. It did not sell out last year; over 450 people will attend this year. I would say the event reservations and our ability to promote our events has been CE's strongest addition to RCGC."

The cause of such a dramatic change is rooted in the club's transition to an embedded suite of reservations systems.

RiverCrest has been able to capitalize on the "prime real estate" pages of their website by posting information about upcoming club events on the tee times and a la carte dining reservation pages. Over the first 5 months, these two pages alone account for an astonishing 82% of all member website traffic with over 310,000 page hits by members alone! "Overall, we're very happy with the way everything works, especially from a technical standpoint," says Jeremy Lejeune, "Everything is very intuitive."

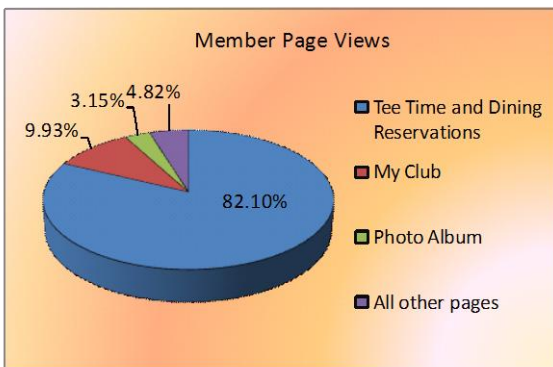
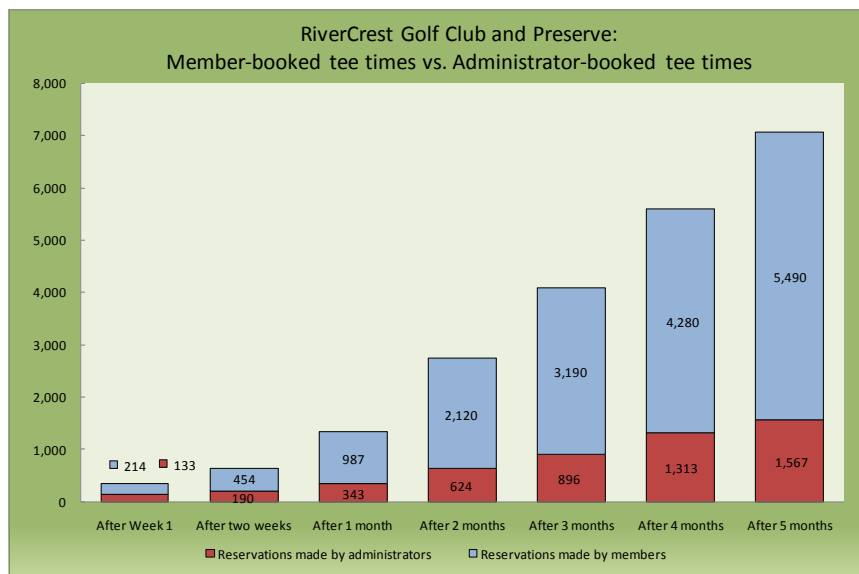
**Conclusion:**

Online reservations applications drive more traffic to a club's website than any other web application. However, only *embedded* reservations applications keep this traffic on a club's website. RiverCrest Golf Club and Preserve made the conscious decision to consolidate four different web application providers with four different websites requiring four different unique

four different unique usernames and passwords and chose to move to a single platform that offered *embedded* reservations applications. Converting over 80% of their page hits from these reservations pages into member awareness of upcoming events has been the key to the club's success.

The myth that there is a huge risk of alienating members by switching web application providers was quickly debunked. RiverCrest witnessed the pay-off through increased member participation at events and an enhanced member experience in as few as five months. As the value of reservations communications and other online marketing channels

become more apparent, the potential financial impact is too great to ignore. Because embedded reservations systems drive more members to sign up for club events, any club can convert their existing reservations communications from an expensive overhead cost into an effective marketing asset, boosting non-dues revenue.



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