

Workshop GC gets completely integrated by Open Solutions

Workshop GC is known to many as the golfing home of not only Lee Westwood but also Mark Foster, another regular European Tour player. Designed and opened in 1914, the course was altered marginally a few years ago to accommodate a new bypass, but it remains a glorious mixture of fast greens and rolling fairways in a heathland setting, with pines and birches at the margins. But perhaps the most significant developments from the perspective of David Dufall, Workshop's Club Secretary, have been to the technology which is used to run the club and clubhouse.

Replacing cumbersome old systems

Following David's advice, the club recently decided to replace its cumbersome and inflexible bar and catering till system along with the old access control system. Both were beset by various issues; because the access control system couldn't be integrated with the rest of the network, members needed two sets of swipe cards: one for the access control system that controlled the main gate, front door and access to the two changing rooms, and another card for the bar and catering till and PSI systems.

That also meant David and his team had to wrestle with two membership databases, along with the potential for both glitches, and errors from needing to input membership data twice. Just to make things more interesting, the supposedly access controlled doors were being constantly propped open by members who couldn't operate the keypad system, or who simply became frustrated with trying to make the cards work. Aside of the complete lack of security, it wasn't a very good idea in cold weather either...

New and fully integrated systems from Open Solutions

Now the club has integrated everything – hardware and software, bar tills and kitchen printers, the Pro Shop till and its bar code scanner, the Player Score Entry system, the doors and gate. It is all operated via one server-based network from Open Solutions. And yes, that now means just one card for the

members, and better still, one membership database for all the software – Croft for the administration, (memberships and subscriptions, bookings, competitions and handicaps) and Open Solutions for the GPoS tills and access control - required by David and his team to manage the club.

David: "Everything's now inhouse, including – unusually – the club's Pro Shop. I can see everything in real time on my PC, whether it's the bar sales, catering sales or shop sales. All my retail staff can multi-task between the shop and the bar, because the GPoS till system is far easier to operate and to train people on. It now takes only minutes to set up products and new prices, or to show a temporary member of our bar staff how to operate the till system."

"It's all networked, fully integrated and gives me whatever reports I or my Committee members want. That's important, because it means we've got a system that works the way we want to manage the club - as opposed to a system that, because of the way it had been written, forced us to adapt to its way of working. The old system made us wait until Mondays for the summary sales information – now because it's all in real time, I can get it whenever I or anyone else on our Committee wants it, day-to-day, hour-to-hour, whatever!"

Increasing and improving security

"Security is a big issue for us, and I'm particularly pleased that we've been able to integrate the access control system with everything else. Carrying one card has made things much easier for our members, and the doors at the front entrance and to the changing rooms now work the way they were meant to, instead of being left open, propped open or sometimes even forced open. They now open or stay shut when they're meant to, and let in those who have their club card, or who we recognise as legitimate visitors."

Even the visitor access is tightly controlled, with four-digit numbers being changed daily (the system provides random numbers for every day of the year) and then given in advance by the club office to whichever visitors or societies are expected. Casual visitors press a bell and are allowed into the Pro

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Shop to register and pay for green fees, before being let into the rest of the club.

The Club Secretary's verdict

How does David summarise his new Open Solutions network and systems? "The GPoS tills are brilliant, they're much better than 'user-friendly'. The members are happier now that they can get in and out more easily, and the overall level - and perception - of security is much higher. I like it because the integration means I can see, do or change everything on my PC. The systems are very reliable, and the support's been very good too. Open Solutions are a good bunch of people to work with."

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