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## Course selection key to successful golf outings

Atlanta Business Chronicle - by [Thornton Kennedy](#) Strategies editor

Before hitting the ball, golfers are encouraged to visualize their shot.

The same method applies to holding a corporate golf event. Whether it is for charity or to impress clients, the first step is to determine the desired result. A tournament aimed at raising money will have a different set up from a golf outing to thank longtime clients or to develop business contacts.

Golf courses are equipped to help once the goals have been established. According to Pat Day with the **Professional Golfers Association of Georgia**, or PGA-Georgia, there are 275 PGA member golf courses in the state, and almost all of them are capable of hosting an event.

"Is [the golf course] going to be a draw?" said Day, the tournament director with PGA-Georgia. "What kind of reputation does it have?"

Regardless of who is hosting the event, the people who are coming out to play will know something about golf, whether they play five times a month or five times a year, said Brian Riggins with golf event company **Magnolia Golf Group Inc.** Choosing a course with a solid reputation that golfers want to play is key in drawing participants.

Finding the best fit is determined by the club's facilities, the clubhouse, dining facilities, pro shop, whether an area can be tented, how many people it can accommodate, whether they provide in-house caterers or if the company can bring in its own caterers.

In terms of cost, most courses charge a per-player fee, which can range from \$75 to \$100 per player for a public or semi-private club, said Riggins. Organizers can pay as much as \$150 per player at a private course. These costs are to play golf and do not include food and beverages. If the company is considering a private club, a member needs to set the event up through management, according to Riggins.

The next step is to visit potential courses to meet with the golf pro and event manager. The organizer should get a feel for the golf course, sample the food and tour the facilities.

Another question to consider is about course maintenance. Most companies don't want their guests playing on a day the greens are being aerated, for example. Also, many golf courses are closed on Mondays or Tuesdays, so an opening cost may be required.

Riggins said one trend that Magnolia Golf Group is seeing is corporate events morphing into fundraisers. Often a successful company tournament will raise money for a worthy cause, which Magnolia Golf can facilitate as well.

"It's a win-win," he said.

If the golf outing is a fundraiser, seeking out corporate sponsors is key. Having companies sponsor individual holes and help provide awards for the end of the tournament helps defer costs. Companies should contact their business partners about raffle items, tee gifts and auction items as well.

### How to plan a golf outing

#### Tips

- Determine the goal of the golf outing and set a budget.
- Visit golf courses, meet with the professionals and event managers.
- Get help from business partners with prizes, raffle items or tee gifts.

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