



By Debra Kristopson

High Touch— High Tech

Skillfully Blending Technology into the Resort/Club Experience

Even the more staid and conservative resorts and clubs are adopting leading-edge technologies to enhance the guest and member experience.

High touch vs. high tech—it's an argument that has waged since the introduction of technology into the industry. But the times, and luckily the technologies, have changed to the point where high touch is now most easily achieved through the use of high tech. Even the more staid and conservative resorts and clubs are adopting leading-edge technologies to effectively provide or enhance the guest and member experience.

Where to Start?

If you're in the market to evaluate these systems, the Web may be your best friend. It's an excellent source of information on available functionality. Spend some time, research vendor Web sites and develop a list of required functionality which best suits your environment. But be cautious, the software may be the tip of an iceberg if you're implementing these technologies for the first time.

The key to a successful software purchase is to clearly identify your specific needs:

- *Where are you positioning your spa, fitness facility, golf course or racquet club in your overall offering?*
- *Is it a primary attractant or a secondary service?*
- *Will you offer your service to non-guests and members?*
- *Who is your competition?*
- *How sophisticated will you need to be to compete?*

Spa and Fitness Facilities

Gone are the days of the simple fitness facility and spa with a few treadmills, a weight machine and a massage. While the sheer complexity of operating a leading-edge facility within a resort or club environment has prompted some to outsource this function, there are many who prefer to service this need in house.

If you're considering operating your own facility, the most basic systems will focus on scheduling and billing; the more complex systems have evolved into fitness management systems.

Many resorts have chosen to offer their facilities to non-guests and in essence have become private clubs for local residents. If this is a component of your business plan then you will also want to focus on the membership and billing components of the spa management systems.

High touch with these systems is provided with daily agendas, personalized fitness plans and client preference tracking. High tech is required for the multi-dimensional resource planning of resources, facilities, staff and clients.

Golf and GPS

Golf and GPS technology fit together like a hand and a glove. GPS-based golf applications have matured to the point that the technology is no longer automating manual processes; rather the technology has brought new applications to the sport and improved the overall management of the course.

One of the most basic and most important applications of GPS technology on the golf course is automated emergency communication. With one keystroke the golf course manager can notify all golfers of an emergency

THE OFFICIAL DISCLAIMER

- 1** A great vendor Web site doesn't guarantee a great vendor.
- 2** The vendors referenced in this article are for educational purposes only. It is not an endorsement or recommendation of the vendor.



SURF THE WEB: If you are in the market for one of these systems, the Internet is your best resource.



Spa and Fitness:

Aphelion
www.aphelion.net
ResortSuite
www.enablez.com
SalonMaster
www.salonmaster.com
SpaSoft
www.spasoft.com



Racquet Facilities:

Greencourt Software
www.greencourtsoftware.com
RacquetSOFT
www.getphysicalsoftware.com
TopdogTennis
www.topdogtennis.com



Golf Course:

ParView
www.parview.com
ProShot Golf
www.proshotgolf.com
UpLink
www.uplinkgolf.com
GolfHero
www.golfhero.com

CHECK IT OUT: Review these vendor Web sites for more information.

When properly maintained these systems can provide both improved guest service and increased operating efficiencies.

condition such as approaching inclement weather. Specific golfers can also be immediately located. Gone are the days when you send out a cart to locate a golfer.

For the golf course managers, GPS technology allows them to monitor the pace of play and location of any golfer. If they're entrepreneurial, they may be able to leverage this information into additional food and beverage sales. There's even the opportunity to sell advertising.

For the individual golfers, there's no longer a need to guess how far away from the hole they are — that information is available onscreen. Some systems offer a graphical view of the course and the golfer's location on the course. Even a tournament coordinator can benefit with interactive scoring and electronic scoreboards.

Racquet and Tennis Management Simplified

Automation for racquet sports has evolved well beyond court scheduling. Software is also available for tournament sched-

uling, tournament management and court maintenance tracking and scheduling.

Improved Guest or Member Service and Increased Efficiency

Sound too good to be true? It's not. When properly implemented these systems can provide both improved guest or member service and increased operating efficiencies. Many of these systems even provide a Web-based interface that allows your guest or client to participate in his or her own activities planning.

With all of the different areas of your resort or club to consider, sometimes it's difficult to determine where to invest your capital. These systems offer you the best of both worlds.

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Editor's Note

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