A PLANNING GUIDE FOR SUCCESSFUL GOLF OUTINGS

You've just been asked to plan this year's company golf outing. So where do you begin? Pulling off a successful corporate retreat or golf outing takes work and a great deal of organization and coordination to make it happen. The larger the event, the more prepared the planner needs to be to ensure the execution of all of the details. This particular section will focus specifically on the "golf outing" aspect of a corporate retreat and will provide you with some helpful information to guide you through the planning process.

FIRST STEPS
To ensure a favorable outcome for all stakeholders—including the sponsor, participants, vendors and golf course operators—and to have a personal and professional sense of accomplishment, the planner must first understand the sponsor's expectations of the event. It's equally important to get a sense of the golfing abilities of those playing.   Is the outing for a group of executives who are seasoned golfers who wish to play serious golf on a top quality course? Or, is the outing for fun, less serious, with many inexperienced golfers? This will determine the courses you consider for your outing. By understanding some of the basics up front, it will determine not only which course you play, but also the type of golf format you choose – "best ball scramble", "better ball of pairs", etc.

The golf professional at the course will be able to help you determine the best format to ensure that your group has fun and completes the game in the standard amount of time – which is roughly 4-1/2 hours.   The larger the group, especially without a shotgun start, the more time will be needed to finish up the round; this will determine when you want your food & beverage to be ready. Typically, there are 8-10 minutes between foursomes for teeing off, but courses vary on this, so you will need to check. Also, a shotgun start will get everyone off at the same time and finishing up relatively close, but usually the course requires the maximum of 144 golfers to do this type of format.

NEXT STEPS
The 12 items listed below are important items you will need to research when planning your event.   Every course has different policies on these items, so be sure to make a list of these 12 and document the information from each course you are considering before making your final decision:

(1)	Outings Rates	(7)	Weather
(2)	Outings Payment	(8)	Group Clinics
(3)	Dress Code Policy	(9)	Practice Facility
(4)	Outing Services	(10)	Merchandise
(5)	Rental Clubs	(11)	Outing Information
(6)	Reservation/Cancellation (Shotguns and Consecutive Play)	(12)	Food and Beverage

Use the golf course websites to gather much of this information (many of the courses have websites these days and include this information), or make some phone calls to the courses.   Also, check availability of dates and times when calling.   This will save you time and energy.   Once you've done your research, you will then need to begin planning.

LAST STEPS
This form will provide you with a sequence of information that will help you when working with the course.   The more prepared you are at the start of the discussion; the smoother the process will be for the planner and the golf course operators coordinating the event. Preparation and knowledge will help ensure that your event is successful and enjoyed by all!