



Case Study - Leisure/Hospitality

How the new hospitality division of a major real estate firm created a unique brand strategy to revolutionize the golf club industry.

The Situation:

Sawyer Realty Holdings LLC, one of America's largest property management companies (24,000 apartments, 1000 employees) headquartered in Needham, MA, was starting up a new company. Their business strategy was to acquire and revitalize distressed golf club properties with substantial Food and Beverage (F&B) market potential. Traditionally, golf clubs' F&B operations are loss leaders or contribute minimally to profitability.

This new company, directed by experienced pros from the hospitality industry, would pursue a mission to revolutionize the golf club industry. They would create hospitality-driven club environments that would provide a high-level guest experience

- not only in golf, but also in dining and events – a “destination” that would be sought out for its hospitality
- whether a public or private club.

The Insight/Brand Strategy:

Collaboration between the client and the agency's brand strategy team brought forward the uniqueness of the new company's mission – built on a strong foundation:

- Proven hospitality management expertise
- Financial strength
- A passion for innovation
- A new vision for hospitality

A brand strategy was developed to identify each acquired golf property as a “HOSPITALITY DESTINATION” where “HOSPITALITY ENVIRONMENTS” are created to precisely fit the market – to provide a one-of-a-kind brand appeal to targeted market segments – where every detail of the hospitality experience – every touch point – is optimized to exceed customer satisfaction standards.

Brand Positioning:

A name and brand identity for the company were developed that would communicate the innovative, forward-looking personality of the company – Forewinds Hospitality. A “forewind” is a wind that blows a ship foreword – a favorable wind. “Hospitality” defines the core mission of each Forewinds property.

“Forewinds Hospitality creates hospitality destinations” became the brand positioning statement that would drive acquisition feasibility planning, operations and marketing.

A brand personality was developed to communicate a lively, bright, welcoming environment at each Forewinds golf property – using lots of photography, lots of people – couples, families, not just laughing and “having a good time,” but also quietly “chilling out,” relaxed – an environment that provides whatever the customer wants it to be. A golf club can be the new gathering place – for couples and families – not a source of tension as the guy heads off for golf with his buddies while the wife, girlfriend or the kids do “their thing.” A Forewinds golf club is a place everyone can enjoy – with specialized programming for women, kids, family dining and recreation opportunities. This is the 21st-century golf club and Forewinds is out front, leading the way.

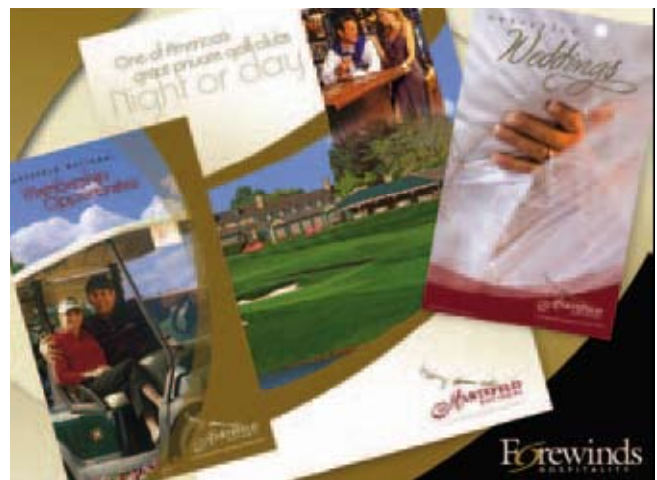


Brand Expression:

Every communication includes the Forewinds brand statement, “ a Forewinds hospitality destination” and, when space allows, the Forewinds brand essence – continually communicating the value of the Forewinds brand – so that, within a few years of consistently delivering evidence of distinction, and an intensive public relations campaign, the Forewinds name on a golf property will signify a set of expectations that will be recognized and highly valued by the new generation emerging – a generation that is looking for a place to “belong” as a family – a place that meets their special needs and desires – a long way from “their father’s golf club.”

A word about public relations: There is too often in brand development a focused attention on the graphics and style of delivering communication tools that build the brand – ads, TV, collateral, web sites, Internet marketing, etc. Yet our experience shows that PR, especially when limited budgets require scrutiny of every investment dollar, is the most powerful tool for building new brands.

The credibility of third-party endorsement breaks through the consumer cynicism about advertising and delivers evidence that can more consistently influence choice. For Forewinds, creative and intensive PR initiatives are a major component of the tactical branding plan – with extraordinary results as the word spreads that Forewinds is a major up-and-coming, innovative brand that identifies its golf properties as unique, one-of-a-kind, extraordinary.



The Results:

In its first year, Forewinds has acquired six clubs from Massachusetts to Maryland and plans an intensive and continuous acquisition program. The agency is a major part of the strategic planning team. Frequent meetings and communication ensure the brand strategy and tactical branding plan stay in precise alignment.

For the first club acquired, a dramatic, oversized 4-color booklet sent in a plastic see-through envelope to a nervous membership list helped achieve an astounding 110 closed membership agreements in just 3 months – 200% over projections.