



## PLANNING FOR PROMOTIONS

Before you can begin planning a contest, you need to determine what you are trying to accomplish. Your goals and expectations, along with your budget, will determine a course of action.

To determine your goals, answer these questions:

I want my contest to:

- Reward my best players
- Reward a wide range of players
- Get more people to play
- Take place live on one day
- Take place online over a period of time
- Take place online with a big event at the end

I personally want to:

- Be very involved with the event
- Be as hands off as possible
- Give out big prizes
- Give out a lot of prizes
- Work with a decent budget
- Not spend a lot of money
- Have the players fund most of it

Your answers will help determine a path to take for planning and executing your promotion. No matter what format or motivation you choose, keep in mind that every good promotion takes effort and commitment, beginning with a solid plan, a decent budget of time and money, and good, clear advertising.

### **BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

Regardless of what kind of promotion you decide to run, every contest will need rules, prizes and advertising. Leave yourself plenty of time to sort out these important details and spread the word to your customers and locations.

Informing and involving your locations can be very beneficial in spreading awareness and attracting players to your contest, and some may even help with your prizes or costs. The more people come to play, the more they spend at the location, so don't be afraid to ask for help.

### **RULES**

Figure out the contest rules and create a simple poster. Posting the rules will keep questions and complaints to a minimum. Be concise yet thorough so your players understand what to do and what not to do.



## PLANNING FOR PROMOTIONS (CONTINUED)

Some basic rules to cover are:

- Start and end dates
- Number of winners and prizes
- Where to enter (participating locations)
- How to enter (which courses, which game formats, minimum number of games, etc.)
- What to do to win (best score, average score, most birdies, etc.)
- What not to do (age restrictions, multiple cards, playing for others, must be present to win, etc.)

### **PRIZES**

Every promotion, big or small, will require prizes. The most obvious goal is to generate additional game play to cover the cost of prizes, but you must be prepared to commit to and award a prize budget in advance. Prizes can come in many forms, including cash, merchandise, golden tee gift cards, or an entry into a live event.

### **ADVERTISE YOUR CONTEST BEFORE THE EVENT**

Complete and comprehensive rules, posted in advance, are the most important thing you can do to keep your contest running smoothly and fairly. A variety of poster templates and art images are available on [itsgames.com](http://itsgames.com). Import these images into your word processor program and add your text. Printed 8 ½ x 11 flyers work well at the game and around the bar.

Use the free AdWiz program to create full screen advertisements that can be installed on your Golden Tee and Silver Strike machines via DVD or from your online Operator Services account.

Send your information to IT for additional advertising. Incredible Technologies will be happy to post your information on their websites for extra exposure.

### **ADVERTISE YOUR CONTEST DURING THE EVENT**

Post leaderboards throughout the contest so players can check their standings and stay engaged. Even if the contest is only one night, bring a whiteboard or poster to write down the leaders or winners. For longer events, send messages and leaderboards right to your games using the free FACTS LIVE software. You can quickly and easily update and send formatted leaderboards or text messages directly to your game screens using your home or office computer.

### **ADVERTISE YOUR CONTEST AFTER THE EVENT**

Post your final standings at each location, on the game and even on a website. It is important to let everyone know who your winners are. Take photos of the winners receiving their prizes and post them as well. Players love their time in the spotlight and will show loyalty to your company if treated well.

Plan a final Golden Tee Party to cap off your promotion and award the prizes there. Meet with the location owner in advance to offer food or drink specials or door prizes. Encourage the crowd to play more games and have fun.



## CHOOSE A CONTEST TO SUIT YOUR GOALS

### **Simple In-House Contests**

Some contests can be as easy as putting up a poster announcing a small prize for the player who has the highest score on the game each week, or is the first to reach some kind of milestone. Examples are a free sandwich coupon to the player with the highest score of the week, or \$300 to the first player to get a 300 game on Silver Strike Bowling. These types of contests do not require a lot of manpower, and run on their own. They generally appeal to the "regulars" in a location, and may not entice new players to participate.

### **Game Nights**

This type of contest is great for attracting play to your machines on slow nights. Sign up a group of 8 to 16 players and host a single-elimination bracketed contest, or a Closest to the Pin contest on Golden Tee. Be sure to have enough prizes for all participants, so everyone is a winner!

### **Leagues**

Just like pool and darts, the skill-based nature of IT games are perfect for long-term league play. Modify your current league structure to sign up teams that meet on a weekly basis. Set a schedule for travelling leagues to involve your entire route. Ask players to use their Player Cards so you can track final scores with FACTS if necessary. Be sure your rules and prizes are well defined so there are minimal conflicts. Plan a final event to award trophies and have some fun!

### **Open Invitational Events**

Advertise and organize an open invitational event that spans a weekend. Include an entry fee for participants, that is used to partially fund the prize pool. Players can pay to play to cover expenses, such as bringing in more machines to play on during the event. Use Locked Conditions Cards (supplied by IT) during qualifying rounds on Golden Tee LIVE machines, so everyone plays on the same course with the same conditions. Then set up bracketed head-to-head matches for the players who make the cut, to determine the winners.

### **Online Contests Using FACTS**

Your online IT games allow you to run contests without you having to be present at the location. Use the free FACTS LIVE software to track game play from your online machines. FACTS offers dozens of game criteria to base your contest, from best score to most birdies or spare pickups. Make sure you consider your goals when choosing the contest type. Do you want to reward your best players, attract new players, maximize games played, or somewhere in between? Once you decide your objectives you can tailor a contest that will achieve those goals. Post messages and leaderboards right on your games throughout your contest to keep players engaged and informed. Qualify finalists for a live event, or simply have a final party to award prizes and thank your players in person. Host it at the location with the most play, to keep your accounts involved.



## POPULAR ONLINE FACTS CONTEST FORMATS

FACTS offers a wide variety of criteria to rank players. Below are some of the most common and effective criteria to choose for your contest. Be sure the criteria you choose matches your goals and expectations for your promotion.

### **Formats that work well for all skill levels:**

- Birdies or Better
- Most Great Shot Points
- Most Games Played

### **Formats that promote skill play:**

- Best Score
- Best Average Score
- Most Holes in One

### **Helpful Tips:**

- Choose your start and end dates wisely. Select 5:00 AM as your start and times, to make sure all late night plays are counted. Leave room to get the word out before starting your contest. Don't make your contest too long. Good or frequent players may discourage others if they get too far ahead too quickly.
- Choose your main criteria, as well as at least two tiebreakers. Great Shot Points, Golden Tee Points and Rounds Played make good tiebreakers.
- Make sure the participating locations are selected, and your players are aware of where to play.
- Select all courses and all online game types. Unless your rules are very specific, limiting your contest may result in player confusion. Note that OFFLINE plays (without using an ID card) are not counted.
- Sort your leaderboard by Best to Worst. Experiment with the other sorting options to see where your players are playing and how many games they played, but don't use this information as your public results.
- Count completed games only. Partial games can affect your results, especially if using handicaps.
- Consider a minimum number of games to be played before being counted on the leaderboard. This works well with average score contests. If this is chosen be sure to include it in your rules.
- Encourage players to check in with the same ID every time they play. Combining play from multiple IDs is not available.
- Consider running results and sending leaderboards at least 3 times during the event. One early on, one at the halfway point and one close to the end will add excitement to the participants and help drive more play.