



## **Mail Survey Hillcrest Golf Course July 2009**

### Introduction

As a method to gauge the attitudes and opinions of club members, Tosch & Associates, Inc. was employed to coordinate a mail-based survey of the club membership. A survey was mailed to all current members with instructions to complete and return the survey for tabulation. The purpose of the survey was to gather opinions about the condition of the course, the expected salary for the club pro and to garner input about the financial revenues of the club. The Hillcrest board of directors provided most of the questions. Tosch & Associates added three questions and edited and arranged others. Response rates for mail in surveys vary widely depending on the subject matter and population sample selected. In most cases, a 25% response rate would be considered good. In the case of this survey, 42% of the surveys delivered were returned and tabulated.

### Methodology

Tosch & Associates prepared the survey instrument for the purpose of mailing and collecting responses. A total of 1104 surveys were initially mailed with an additional eight surveys mailed or hand delivered at member's/club's request. A total of 465 of the surveys were returned before the July 22<sup>nd</sup> due date and then tabulated. Tosch & Associates certifies the accuracy of the tabulation and reporting of the results.

### Summary of Findings

Based on the data collected, Hillcrest Golf Course enjoys a high level of satisfaction from the majority of its members for its affordability, playability and level of service provided at the course. A wide variety of opinions were expressed on many of the other questions posed. A couple of the questions elicited a high number of no-responses, a factor that should be considered in reviewing the data. Many respondents included written comments throughout the survey regarding the questions and their responses. We have encapsulated the most popular comments in the findings but our tabulations do not include each and every comment on every survey. An overview of each question is included in the report with the findings.

**Please note that some percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.**

# Membership Survey Report

Tosch & Associates, Inc., on behalf of Hillcrest Golf Club, is conducting the following survey. We are interested in getting your opinion about some important issues. All responses will remain strictly confidential. The following survey will only take a few minutes. Thank you in advance for your input. Please answer all questions.

**1. How would you rate the affordability of the annual golf memberships offered by Hillcrest Golf Club?**

|                   |                     |                   |                       |                   |                |                   |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>53%</b><br>245 | <b>22%</b><br>104   | <b>20%</b><br>93  | <b>2%</b><br>11       | <b>1%</b><br>6    | <b>1%</b><br>6 | <b>99%</b><br>465 |
| Very Affordable   | Somewhat Affordable | Moderately Priced | Somewhat Unaffordable | Very Unaffordable | DNA            | <b>TOTAL</b>      |

*75% of the membership rated the affordability as either very affordable or somewhat affordable. Only 3% of the membership considered the membership fee to be unaffordable in any way.*

**2. How would you rate the playing condition of the Hillcrest Golf Course overall? Please consider the general conditions of the tee boxes, fairways, bunkers, greens, etc.**

|                   |                   |                 |               |               |                |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>46%</b><br>214 | <b>45%</b><br>211 | <b>7%</b><br>33 | <b>-</b><br>1 | <b>-</b><br>1 | <b>1%</b><br>5 | <b>99%</b><br>465 |
| Very Good         | Good              | Average         | Poor          | Very Poor     | DNA            | <b>TOTAL</b>      |

*91% of the members rated playing conditions good or very good. Only two respondents rated the conditions poor or very poor.*

**3. How would you rate the caliber of service provided at Hillcrest Golf Course? Please consider the service at the check-in counter, the pro shop, the snack bar, etc.**

|                   |                   |                  |                 |                |                |                    |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <b>48%</b><br>221 | <b>37%</b><br>172 | <b>11%</b><br>52 | <b>2%</b><br>10 | <b>1%</b><br>4 | <b>1%</b><br>6 | <b>100%</b><br>465 |
| Very Good         | Good              | Average          | Poor            | Very Poor      | DNA            | <b>TOTAL</b>       |

*85% of the members rated the service at Hillcrest to be good or very good. 11% rated the service as average while just 3% of the respondents indicated that the service was poor or very poor.*

**4. To increase revenue for the operation of the Course would you be willing to pay a per round usage fee required at check in for each 9-holes of golf played?**

|                  |                   |                  |                 |                    |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>10%</b><br>46 | <b>72%</b><br>334 | <b>15%</b><br>72 | <b>3%</b><br>13 | <b>100%</b><br>465 |
| Yes              | No                | Maybe            | DNA             | <b>TOTAL</b>       |

72% of the members indicated that they would not be willing to pay a per round usage fee. 10% of the respondents indicated that they would pay a fee while 16% of the membership indicated that they may be willing to pay a per round fee depending on the circumstances.

**5. What usage fee would you be willing to pay for each 9-holes of golf played?**

|                   |                  |                 |                 |                |                 |                    |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>70%</b><br>325 | <b>16%</b><br>76 | <b>5%</b><br>23 | <b>3%</b><br>13 | <b>1%</b><br>3 | <b>5%</b><br>25 | <b>100%</b><br>465 |
| None              | \$1-\$2          | \$3-\$4         | \$5             | More than \$5  | DNA             | <b>TOTAL</b>       |

70% of the respondents indicated their lack of willingness to pay a per round fee. Collectively, 25% of the polled members did indicate that they would consider a fee with the majority (16%) indicating a willingness to pay one or two dollars.

**6. The advertisement for the golf professional 4 years ago specified that the golf professional has the "potential to earn \$110,000 to \$120,000". Do you believe this is a fair total compensation for the Hillcrest golf professional?**

|                   |                  |                   |                 |                    |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>52%</b><br>242 | <b>17%</b><br>77 | <b>28%</b><br>128 | <b>4%</b><br>18 | <b>101%</b><br>465 |
| Yes               | No               | I don't know      | DNA             | <b>TOTAL</b>       |

52% of the membership surveyed indicated that the salary range of \$110,000 to \$120,000 was fair compensation for the head golf professional. 17% of the membership surveyed indicated that it was not fair. 28% did not know if it was fair compensation.

**7. What total compensation range do you think is appropriate for the Hillcrest golf professional?**

|                             |                            |                             |                              |                              |                  |                    |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| <b>2%</b><br>7              | <b>20%</b><br>91           | <b>39%</b><br>180           | <b>17%</b><br>79             | <b>6%</b><br>28              | <b>17%</b><br>80 | <b>101%</b><br>465 |
| Less than \$60,000 annually | \$60,000-\$90,000 annually | \$90,000-\$120,000 annually | \$120,000-\$150,000 annually | More than \$150,000 annually | DNA              | <b>TOTAL</b>       |

39% of the respondents indicated that the appropriate salary range for the golf professional was between \$90,000-\$120,000. Only 1% believes the salary range should be below \$60,000 while 6% believed the salary range should exceed \$150,000. 17% of members did not answer this question.

**8. Please complete the following statements:**

8a. We should offer our golf professional the **minimum** total compensation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, annually.

Responses for this question ranged widely with some respondents 6%, indicated the minimum salary should be \$60,000 while 1% believed the minimum salary should be in excess of \$170,000 annually. 12% indicated the minimum salary should be \$90,000. In summary, 23% of respondents indicate a minimum salary of \$100,000 or more while 26% responded \$60,000 to \$90,000 should be the minimum. 205 or 44% of the respondents did not answer this question at all. A number of respondents made written comments about this question.

Please note that responses were rounded to the nearest \$10,000 increment for tabulation purposes. (see Table A for results)

**8b. I am willing to pay the following extra membership dues per year to make that happen:**

|                   |                  |                 |                 |                 |                   |                    |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>40%</b><br>186 | <b>15%</b><br>70 | <b>9%</b><br>41 | <b>7%</b><br>31 | <b>5%</b><br>24 | <b>24%</b><br>113 | <b>100%</b><br>465 |
| None              | \$10-\$19        | \$20-\$39       | \$40-59         | \$60 or more    | DNA               | <b>TOTAL</b>       |

40% respondents indicated that they would not be willing to pay additional membership dues to maintain a minimum pro salary. 35% of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay additional membership fees to fund the professional's minimum salary. Of those willing to pay extra, the most popular selection was to pay an additional \$10-\$19 with 15% of the total respondents. 24% of the respondents did not answer this particular question.

8c. We should keep our golf professional at a **maximum** total compensation of \$\_\_\_\_\_, annually.

**The following table shows the corresponding responses to questions 8a and 8c regarding the minimum and maximum pro's compensation.**

**Table A**

**Table B**

|           | <b>Minimum</b>   |  |           | <b>Maximum</b>   |
|-----------|------------------|--|-----------|------------------|
| \$60,000  | <b>6%</b><br>28  |  | \$60,000  | <b>1%</b><br>3   |
| \$70,000  | <b>3%</b><br>16  |  | \$70,000  | <b>1%</b><br>3   |
| \$80,000  | <b>5%</b><br>23  |  | \$80,000  | <b>2%</b><br>11  |
| \$90,000  | <b>12%</b><br>56 |  | \$90,000  | <b>5%</b><br>23  |
| \$100,000 | <b>6%</b><br>29  |  | \$100,000 | <b>3%</b><br>12  |
| \$110,000 | <b>3%</b><br>12  |  | \$110,000 | <b>2%</b><br>10  |
| \$120,000 | <b>8%</b><br>36  |  | \$120,000 | <b>12%</b><br>54 |
| \$130,000 | <b>2%</b><br>9   |  | \$130,000 | <b>1%</b><br>3   |
| \$140,000 | -<br>1           |  | \$140,000 | <b>1%</b><br>3   |
| \$150,000 | <b>3%</b><br>14  |  | \$150,000 | <b>5%</b><br>24  |
| \$160,000 | -<br>0           |  | \$160,000 | -<br>2           |
| \$170,000 | -<br>0           |  | \$170,000 | -<br>1           |

|                   |                   |  |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| \$171,000 or more | <b>1%</b><br>5    |  | \$171,000 or more | <b>5%</b><br>21   |
| I don't know      | <b>7%</b><br>31   |  | I don't know      | <b>7%</b><br>32   |
| Did not answer    | <b>44%</b><br>205 |  | Did not answer    | <b>56%</b><br>263 |

**Responses have been rounded to the nearest \$10,000 increment for tabulations purposes.**

*56% of the survey respondents did not answer question 8c. A number of respondents indicated in written commentary that they needed more information to properly answer the question. 7% indicated that they did not know what salary was appropriate. Of those that did respond the range of responses varied widely from \$60,000 to unlimited. \$120,000 was the most popular salary chosen with 12% indicating that preference and with no other amount garnering more than 5% of the responses.*

*Please note that responses were rounded to the nearest \$10,000 increment for tabulation purposes.*

**9. To improve our cash flow, the loan for the irrigation system could be extended by several years. While adding to the overall expense of the loan, the loan extension would provide some cash flow relief to pay for current club expenses. Would you support extending the loan?**

|                   |                  |                  |                 |                    |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>67%</b><br>310 | <b>11%</b><br>51 | <b>20%</b><br>91 | <b>3%</b><br>13 | <b>101%</b><br>465 |
| Yes               | No               | I don't know     | Did not answer  | <b>TOTAL</b>       |

*67% of the members expressed their support for extending the loan on the irrigation system. 11% of the polled membership indicated that they would not support the loan extension. 20% indicated that they didn't know or needed more information to make a determination.*

**10. In order to continue current golf course and clubhouse maintenance, the Club must either increase revenue, cut expenses, or both. Please prioritize the following choices 1-5 (#1 being highest priority, #2 second, etc.):**

The respondents who listed one of the options as their highest priority are detailed in the following analysis.

**Priority Level**

|   | 1                 | 2                 | 3                 | 4                | 5                | DNA               | <b>TOTAL</b>       |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Extend and/or refinance the irrigation loan repayment | <b>57%</b><br>266 | <b>15%</b><br>70  | <b>7%</b><br>31   | <b>5%</b><br>22  | <b>1%</b><br>4   | <b>16%</b><br>72  | <b>101%</b><br>465 |
| Increase membership dues                              | <b>12%</b><br>55  | <b>22%</b><br>100 | <b>22%</b><br>102 | <b>13%</b><br>61 | <b>8%</b><br>38  | <b>23%</b><br>109 | <b>100%</b><br>465 |
| Revise the Head Golf Professional's contract          | <b>8%</b><br>38   | <b>20%</b><br>92  | <b>12%</b><br>57  | <b>15%</b><br>71 | <b>12%</b><br>57 | <b>32%</b><br>150 | <b>99%</b><br>465  |
| Add a usage fee in addition to the membership fee     | <b>3%</b><br>15   | <b>10%</b><br>45  | <b>17%</b><br>79  | <b>21%</b><br>99 | <b>19%</b><br>90 | <b>29%</b><br>137 | <b>99%</b><br>465  |

|                   |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                   |                    |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Other Suggestions | <b>9%</b><br>40 | <b>9%</b><br>43 | <b>8%</b><br>36 | <b>7%</b><br>33 | <b>8%</b><br>37 | <b>59%</b><br>276 | <b>100%</b><br>465 |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|

*The respondents who listed one of the options as their highest priority are detailed in the following analysis. The most popular answer by a significant margin was to extend or refinance the loan. Two hundred sixty six respondents (57%) indicated the loan refinance as the highest priority. Second in priority was increasing membership dues with 12% of the respondents indicating support for that option. Third at 9% was the category of other suggestions. Many of those suggestions are detailed in the list below. Fourth was revising the pro's contract with 8% suggesting that as the best option and finally adding a usage fee was the least recommended option at only 3%.*

**The following table lists the most popular comments from the write-in portion of the survey.**

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Increase Daily Green Fees                                    | <b>9%</b><br>42 |
| Board Members Resignation/Recall Board Members/Improve Board | <b>7%</b><br>33 |
| Keep John  | <b>7%</b><br>32 |
| Cut other Expenses   | <b>6%</b><br>30 |
| Increase Private Cart/Storage Fees                           | <b>4%</b><br>17 |
| Increase Hours of Snack Bar                                  | <b>3%</b><br>13 |
| Rent Club House Out  | <b>3%</b><br>13 |
| Hire Club Manager/Not Golf Pro                               | <b>2%</b><br>7  |
| Need more Information to Answer                              | <b>1%</b><br>6  |
| Merchandise in Pro Shop that Someone/Women Would Buy         | <b>1%</b><br>6  |
| Fundraising  | <b>1%</b><br>5  |
| Speed Up Play  | <b>1%</b><br>5  |
| Refine other Assets  | <b>1%</b><br>4  |
| More Marketing to Hotels/Locals                              | <b>1%</b><br>4  |
| Increase Tournament Fees                                     | <b>1%</b><br>4  |

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Cut Staff                              | <b>1%</b><br>4 |
| Graduated Tee Time/Pre-Booking Fee     | <b>1%</b><br>3 |
| Lower Membership Fees                  | -<br>2         |
| Manage Daily Operations More Carefully | -<br>2         |
| Kitchen Remodel Finance                | -<br>2         |