



SCOTTISH GOLF  
UNION

# The champion of golf in Scotland.

How The SGU and The Union updated the royal and ancient game.

{UNION}





## **Executive summary.**

Golf in Scotland has suffered from an identity hangover caused by a longstanding perception of middle-aged men in plaid and an unwelcoming attitude to non-members. In recent years membership numbers have been falling, and while general engagement was on the rise, there remained a lack of affinity between the Scottish Golf Union, the body representing golf in Scotland, and grass roots club members.

The SGU worked with The Union to overhaul this image, grow the relationship with clubs and members, raise the profile of the organisation and demonstrate that they are united with the ordinary club player rather than the stuffy men in blazers.

We delivered an integrated campaign which included a website overhaul, eCRM strategy development, club activation, targeted on and offline advertising and DM activity which promoted the SGU, its role and new initiatives to demonstrate it was relevant today.

# Ambition and clarity of objectives.

---

## The home of golf

Golf has its roots in Scotland. The first recorded mention of the game appeared in a 1457 Act of the Scottish Parliament issued by James II prohibiting the playing of *gowf* as it was a distraction from archery practice. In spite of this early ban, golf took off in Scotland. Today there are almost 600 clubs with over 230,000 club members and a strong cultural association with the nation.

It's estimated that the industry directly contributes £1.17billion to the economy each year, employing more than 20,000 people.

## Promoting a game for life

The Scottish Golf Union is the governing body for amateur golf in Scotland. It looks to champion the game domestically and maintain the nation's place at the forefront of the sport. Its responsibilities are broad and span everything from getting youngsters playing, to supporting clubs in recruiting new members, to managing Scotland's elite.

Ultimately they aim to promote golf as a sport for life.

## A challenging climate

Scottish golf has been perceived as a stuffy and closed sport, the domain of middle class men. This view hasn't helped in recent times where a combination of factors have lead to a drop in growth for the sport.

Overall membership is declining at around 3% a year and has fallen by 17% since 2004. For the first time clubs are closing, and many others are in financial difficulty.

## Into the rough...

Every golf club member in the country automatically pays an annual fee of £10.60 to The SGU through their club membership fee. This funding measure has been an issue for The SGU as some players feel they are contributing to an out of touch body which doesn't seem to be bringing benefits to the sport in Scotland.

In essence, Scottish golf faced a number of challenges from a variety of sides. So how do we make it and The SGU relevant for modern golfers and help safeguard the sport's future?



# Strategic thinking and effective planning.

## Surveying the terrain

We started by engaging directly with existing golf club members to understand their current views of The SGU and what they wanted to see from their governing body going forward. Almost 3,000 responses were given to the online survey and the feedback was clear:

**92% wanted to receive more benefits for being part of the SGU**

**More than half wanted The SGU to have a better online presence**

**Many cited a lack of awareness as to what The SGU does as a barrier to connecting with them**

It was clear from the survey responses that golfers wanted more from The SGU. There was a strong desire for benefits and preferential rates, but many also cited social media as an area where they'd like to connect more with their sport.

Golfers wanted more information about what The SGU did for them as an individual, and also more broadly for the game in Scotland.



## Diverse and complex competitive set

We faced myriad external challenges. Golf takes time to play, and people are under other pressures like never before. Leisure time is increasingly likely to be spent indoors<sup>1</sup> - with the appeal of televised sport an obvious reason. Participation in sports is down in almost all demographic segments<sup>2</sup>.

Our challenge was how best to connect with our target audience to make them sit up and take notice of golf in Scotland again. It was clear that we needed to improve the visibility and perception of golf and The SGU across a number of audiences without the luxury of a large budget.

	Adults	Men	Women
Percentage of respondents aged 16+ at least once a month			
Walking 2+ miles <sup>14</sup>	30	26	33
Swimming	16	13	18
Leisure pool	12	10	13
Traditional pool	4	3	5
Outdoor	1	2	1
Football	10	19	2
5-a-side all (indoor/outdoor)	6	13	1
5-a-side indoor	4	7	*
5-a-side outdoor	4	9	*
Football in street/garden/wasteland	4	5	2
11-a-side	3	6	*
Cycling	10	14	7
On the road	6	8	5
On a cycle path <sup>15</sup>	4	5	3
Mountain biking/Off-road	3	5	1
BMX	*	*	*
Golf	9	16	2

Adult participation in individual sports<sup>3</sup>

(1) Measuring Up; Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) 2013.

(2) Sport & Recreation Alliance, 2014.

(3) sportscotland Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation in Scotland: 2005-07



# Ambition and clarity of objectives.

## Objective 1: Reposition The SGU as modern, relevant and representative of the fans.

The SGU was still perceived by some to be a stuffy organisation, perhaps even a bit of an old boys club and distant from the real fans.

The SGU needed a fresh communication approach to demonstrate that it was the cornerstone of amateur golf in Scotland, as dedicated to the sport as the fans, and supporting the game at a range of levels in the country.

A focus on online activity was required - the finger most certainly had to be on the digital pulse of the sport to bring it into the 21st century.

## Objective 2: Increase engagements with The SGU via the new membership scheme.

Everyone loves to be part of a club. Except none of the club golfers truly recognised that they were already a member of The SGU - the largest club membership based sports governing body in Scotland. We needed to make this membership feel special and reward those who were a part of it whilst encouraging new people to sign up.

## Objective 3: Support clubs in driving new players to sample the game and to retain existing members.

Vibrant membership is vital to the health of the game. New members are needed to ensure Scotland remains a key player in the golf arena and at a more local level, clubs rely on core income generated by annual membership subscriptions. We needed to provide tools which clubs could use to create consistent, yet flexible, recruitment and retention drives.



# Strategic thinking and effective planning.


## Communications strategy

Our communications ask was broad. We had a number of different audiences to communicate with, promoting different messages, and all outputs needed to be recognisably linked to The SGU.

But there was a consistent thread running through all of our required outputs. Each highlighted that The SGU had the best interests for the sport at all levels at heart.



# Originality and creativity.



AS COMPETITIVE AS FOOTBALL  
BUT WITHOUT THE GRASS BURNS.

It's not a game of two halves. It's 18 unforgettable holes that pit you against yourself. So ditch the pitch and hit the fairway because golf membership is better and more accessible than it's ever been. [FOR YOUR NEAREST CLUB VISIT SCOTTISHGOLF.ORG](http://SCOTTISHGOLF.ORG)

SCOTTISH GOLF UNION  
SCOTTISH LADIES GOLFING ASSOCIATION

Driving new memberships and promoting The SGU as modern and dynamic:

## The battle of the balls

For the lapsed player audience segment we developed creative which would grab their attention and encourage them to consider moving away from their current sport for golf.

We sharply contrasted three other popular Scottish sports and activities with golf. Literally juxtaposing the games against each other to demonstrate that golf is as equally dynamic and exciting.

For too long golf imagery portrayed bleached sunshine against green grass, populated by smiling middle aged men. We chose to depict a grittier side of the game and focus on the different raw emotions the sport evokes.

Due to the small budget we focused on online activation. These ads ran online in press publications such as The Daily Record, The Sun, Bunkered online and on football sites. 6 sheet formats were also negotiated in gyms, 5-a-side football pitches and sports centres to attract our target audience and entice them to consider golf again.



{ UNION }



# Originality and creativity.

## Campaign executions

The campaign featured contrasts with not only football but also fishing and climbing to appeal to a wide range of current sports enthusiasts.



AS EXHILARATING AS CLIMBING  
BUT WITHOUT THE CRAMPONS.

It's not a four hour slog to the top but a meandering adventure to the flag. So ditch the rucksack and grab the golf bag because golf membership is better and more accessible than it's ever been. [FOR YOUR NEAREST CLUB VISIT SCOTTISHGOLF.ORG](http://SCOTTISHGOLF.ORG)



AS RELAXING AS FISHING  
BUT WITHOUT THE MAGGOTS.

A birdie always beats a trout. It's a great source of achievement and banter. So ditch the waders and grab the driver because golf membership is better and more accessible than it's ever been. [FOR YOUR NEAREST CLUB VISIT SCOTTISHGOLF.ORG](http://SCOTTISHGOLF.ORG)



{ UNION }



# Originality and creativity.



Golf is a fun sport, and a great way to stay fit. Also, our series of beginner's coaching sessions make this the perfect opportunity for people of all ages to have a swing at something new.

**PGA**  
The Professional Golfers' Association



## Supporting clubs to recruit new members:

### Get into Golf

Our research showed that one of the barriers towards trying golf for the first time was a sense of intimidation about the going to the club.

We developed *Get into Golf* to promote beginners sessions to those who haven't tried the game before. We developed empty belly posters which clubs could download from the SGU print portal and edit to promote their own beginners classes in the local community or give to existing members to encourage their non-playing friends and family to give it a go. The creative shows beginners (so not in the fancy golf outfits) playing with friends and enjoying the game. The L plates represent the fact that clubs are keen for newbies to get involved.



**{ UNION }**

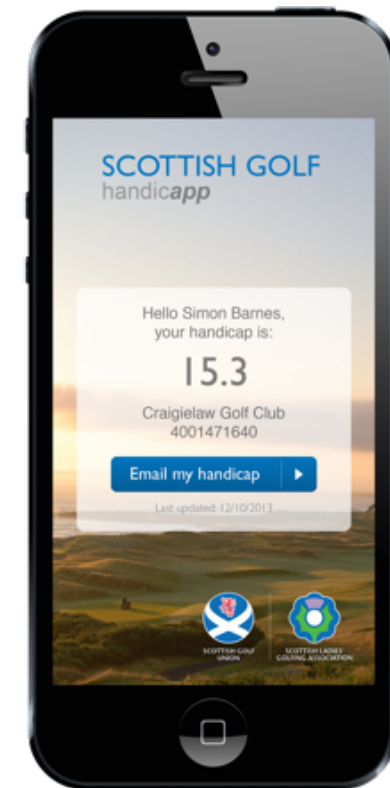
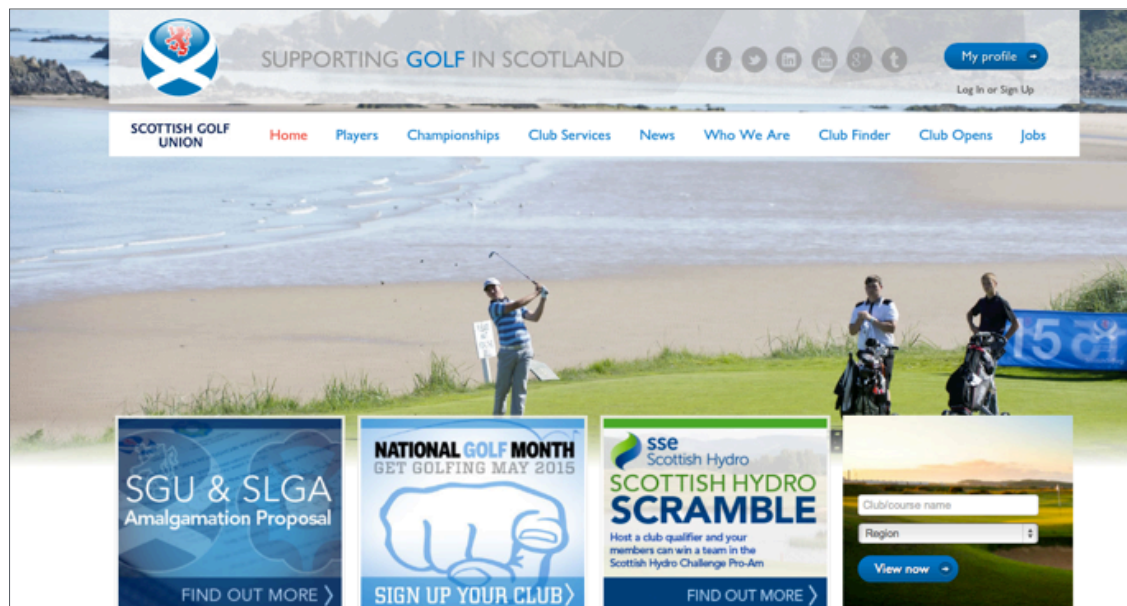
# Execution and implementation.

Engaging with existing members and promoting The SGU as modern and dynamic:

## New look online

The website and digital presence was a main focus for our activity with The SGU. We created a new website that represented the fresh look for SGU with impactful imagery and clear campaign space in contrast to their very busy original site. Links to social media sites were prominently displayed on the home page to encourage interaction.

In addition, we developed a new handicap app - the Scottish Golf *handicapp* - that allowed golf club members instant access to their handicap and the opportunity to present their Handicap Certificate via their smartphone. A first for a golf governing body.



{UNION}



# Execution and implementation.

## HELPING YOU

The Scottish Golf Union and Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association govern the amateur game in Scotland, supporting our clubs, identifying future champions and providing extra practice to golf. Every golf club member in Scotland makes a contribution to the development of the game and in return we provide a range of benefits to clubs and golfers.

- CLUB SUPPORT**  
We support your club in more than 40 areas of their day to day operations through our team of Development Officers.
- NATIONAL EVENTS**  
We stage national championships and events for golfers of all ages and abilities, from the Scottish Boys and Girls Championships through to the Scottish Ladies Scottish.
- EXCLUSIVE MEMBER BENEFITS**  
The Scottish Golf Membership Card provides access to a range of privileged green fee rates at leading courses, exclusive offers from our partners, discounted event tickets and much more.
- STARS OF THE FUTURE**  
We invest in the country's best young talent from our Development Centres, Academy and National Teams, helping to develop the next generation of players to follow in the footsteps of Catherine Morrice and Stephen Gallacher at the top levels of the game.

Try our online handicap tracker and HandiAPP app complete with downloadable certificates.

## SCOTTISH GOLF

### WHAT WE'RE DOING FOR YOU & YOUR CLUB

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP

- Register your club on the HandiAPP app
- Use your HandiAPP app to track your handicap
- Use your HandiAPP app to track your handicap

We represent nearly 600 golf clubs and 220,000 club members in Scotland.

We work through ClubGolf to introduce more young people to the game and have launched Get into Golf to encourage more adult beginners with the aim of growing membership and participation at our clubs.

## HELPING GOLF

WE'VE INTRODUCED OVER **300,000** NINE YEAR OLDS TO GOLF

SCOTTISH GOLF CLUB DEVELOPMENT HAS SUPPORTED **106 & 90** CLUBS THROUGH BUSINESS PLANNING & MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT\*

FOR EVERY £1 PAID BY MEMBERS WE GENERATE £1.14 THROUGH ADDITIONAL REVENUE STREAMS\*

Caitie Stuart is offering a saving of £81 per person per round with the new Membership Card, or £75 off the cost of a 36-hole ticket. Visit [scottishgolf.org/register](http://scottishgolf.org/register) to find out more and access other exclusive green fee rates.

Find out more about what we do at [scottishgolf.org/who-we-are](http://scottishgolf.org/who-we-are)

Increase engagements with members and promote the new card:

## Scottish Golf Membership Card

The focus for 2014 was to develop and promote the groundbreaking membership card. This added value to membership by offering preferential green fee rates, special offers from partners, tickets to attend top golf events and access to the new Scottish Golf HandiAPP, as well as exclusive competitions.

We designed the card and promotional materials that included a bespoke DM piece to each member in Scotland detailing the card and information about what The SGU does for individuals and clubs. We also sent email communications and pre-promoted the card at the Scottish Golf Show. All in the new clean and clear creative style of the new site.

## SCOTTISH GOLF MEMBERSHIP CARD

SSE Scottish Hydro OFFICIAL PARTNER

Make the most of your membership...

## REGISTER NOW

WIN A GOLF TRIP

FREE HandiAPP

SCOTTISH GOLF UNION

{UNION}




# Execution and implementation.

Increase engagements with members and promote the new card:

## e-CRM programme

A key aspect to join all of the dots with the SGU repositioning was to ensure members received regular contact from the organisation. We redesigned the e-CRM newsletter and cleansed the existing database.

We also developed campaign specific email templates for promotions with key partners throughout the year.




SGU GOLFERS E-NEWSLETTER  
WIN WITH TAYLORMADE!

SCOTTISH GOLF UNION

Home Events Club Opens Member Offers Shop


BOOK A FITTING FOR YOUR NEW DRIVER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN THE NEW TAYLORMADE R15 OR AEROBURNER



The Scottish Golf Union has teamed up with our partners at TaylorMade to offer Scottish Golf Membership Cardholders the chance to win one of their fantastic fairway metalwoods. The TaylorMade R15 and TaylorMade AeroBurner metalwoods series were recently launched and are being used by some of the world's leading golfers, including reigning Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open champion Justin Rose and his fellow Ryder Cup star Sergio Garcia.

FIND OUT MORE


Promotion specific template



PLAYER OF THE YEAR - VOTE NOW!  
JANUARY 2015

SCOTTISH GOLF UNION


Home Offers Events Shop Club Opens Member



WELCOME TO THE SGU GOLFERS E-NEWSLETTER

Win a pair of tickets to the 2015 Scottish Golf Awards by voting for your favourite in our Player of the Year poll. There are plenty of great candidates to choose from after a memorable year for Scottish Golf...

FIND OUT MORE




BOOK YOUR TICKETS FOR THE SCOTTISH GOLF AWARDS

Celebrate with friends, golfing colleagues or clients at our star-studded event on Friday 20 March at the Edinburgh Corn Exchange. Tickets are on sale now!

FIND OUT MORE

ENJOY FAMILY FUN WITH THE SCOTTISH HYDRO SCRAMBLE

The popular Scottish Hydro Scramble returns to offer club golfers the dream chance to tee up alongside the Challenge Tour's leading pros at Spey Valley. Contact your club to find out when your local qualifier takes place.



Monthly e-newsletter template

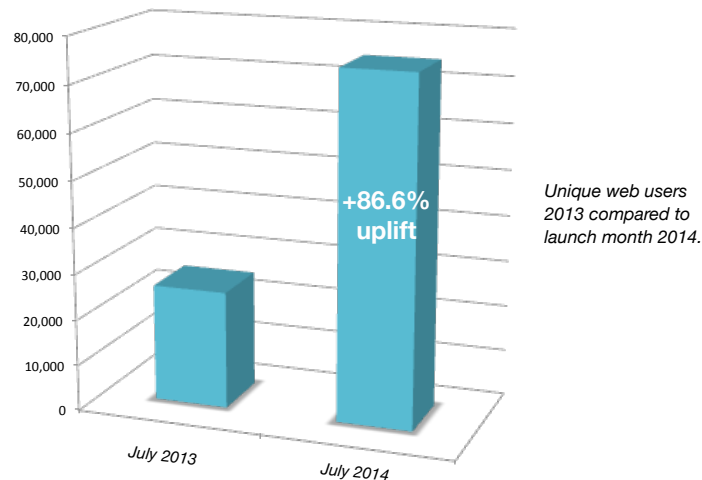
{ UNION }

# Scale and evidence of results.

## Objective 1: Reposition The SGU as modern, relevant and representative of the fans.

The refreshed website and other digital elements all performed strongly in terms of increased player interaction with The SGU.

Before the new website launch, the average unique website users per month totalled 25,513. In July 2014 when we launched the new site, the unique users for that month totalled **74,769**. An increase of **+86.6%**.



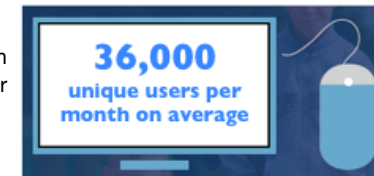
## Commercial viability

As a result of the repositioning, The SGU enjoyed a record year for sponsorship income with more organisations seeing the value in partnering with The SGU. This income increased by **+11.5%** compared to 2013.

+ 11.5% increase in sponsorship income in 2014

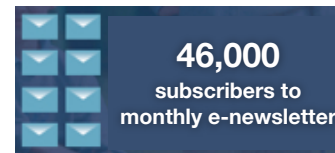


The SGU site now receives an average of 36,000 unique visits per month.



## e-CRM communications

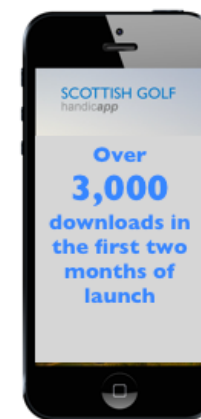
The refreshed e-newsletter has attracted over **46,000** subscribers to the monthly SGU updates - an increase on pre-repositioning figures of over **+142%**



## Get into Golf

**70+** clubs have now signed up to the programme with more than **800** newcomers attracted to the game through this initiative.

GET INTO GOLF



## The handicapp

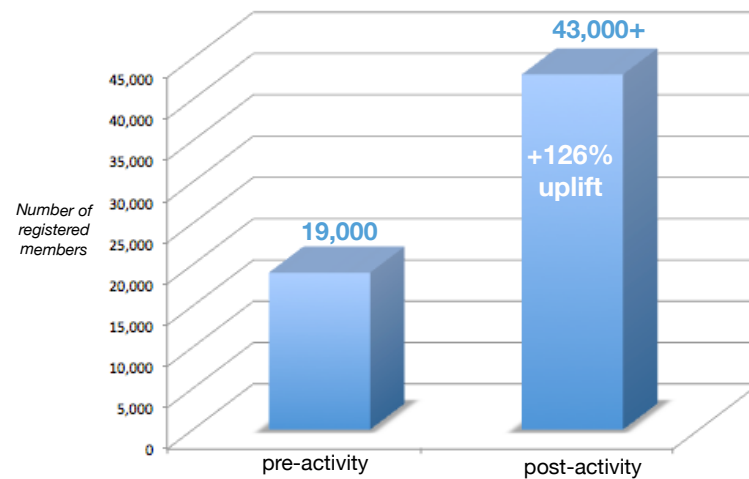
More than **6,000** golfers have downloaded the app to date.

{ UNION }

# Scale and evidence of results.

## Objective 2: Increase engagements with The SGU via the new membership scheme.

The membership card was a resounding success with over **24,000** golfers registering their card within the first three months of activity.



### Direct mail

The Direct Mail piece was sent out to 200,000 golfers that directly contributed 22,000 new registrations - a conversion rate of **+11%**.



# Scale and evidence of results.

## Objective 3: Support clubs in drive new players to sample the game and to retain existing members.

Helped by a range of new marketing tools and resources made available to club committees, more than **30%** of clubs showed an increase in their membership during 2013/14.

### Club satisfaction survey

The SGU's annual club satisfaction survey showed a **17%** increase in satisfaction among clubs related to the services provided to club managers and committees, rising from **70%** in 2013 to **87%** in 2014.

There has been a vast improvement in the marketing support provided to the clubs from The SGU which has had a positive impact on many club's businesses and has helped to add value to membership.

The general profile of the governing body has become far greater, with a refreshingly modern approach to growing the game.



**Jim Callaghan,**  
**Club Manager**  
**Bothwell Castle Golf**  
**Club**

A poster titled "GET INTO GOLF" at the top right. It shows a woman in a pink shirt and black pants swinging a golf club on a green. In the background, two men and a woman are watching. A golf bag is on the left. A flag with a red 'L' is on the right. The text "BEGINNERS WELCOME" is at the bottom left. At the bottom right, there are logos for the PGA of Scotland, the Scottish Golf Union, and the Scottish Ladies Golfing Association.

GET INTO GOLF

BEGINNERS WELCOME

Golf is a fun sport, and a great way to stay fit. Also, our series of beginner's coaching sessions make this the perfect opportunity for people of all ages to have a swing at something new.

PGA The Professional Golfers' Association  
SCOTTISH GOLF UNION  
SCOTTISH LADIES GOLFING ASSOCIATION



## Conclusion:

Golf in Scotland was seen as an un-fashionable sport, governed by an old fashioned body, until The SGU and The Union swung into action. We demonstrated that golf had hit the 21st century and that the SGU represented a forward-thinking, dynamic organisation. On a tiny budget we created a multi-faceted activation approach that spoke to existing and lapsed golfers, newbies and the clubs themselves. Our campaign proved that, in the form of The SGU, Scottish golf had a champion to be proud of.