



Why Material Matters are the perfect fit at your club

■ The company name is as much a statement of fact as it is a description. Material does matter, and Material Matters is the simplest way of reducing the often prohibitive costs associated with running a successful golf club.

Since its launch in 2010, Surrey-based Material Matters has steadily built up its customer and supplier base to the extent that it now has more than 220 clubs, mainly across the south of England, all benefiting from the best volume prices available from a number of respected, specialist suppliers through its system of centralised purchasing.

The average annual saving for an 18-hole golf course often works out to be more than £20,000 per annum. Indeed, so successful has Material Matters been that it is now the official purchasing partner for the UK Golf Course Owners Association (UKGCOA), and also other prestigious venues.

Initially, Material Matters worked on supplies only for the golf course itself. However, so popular – and successful – did it prove that after just ten months trading the business was able to put in place a clubhouse proposition as well, offering the same great value for food, beverage and consumables.

Director Paul Mould explained: “We now deal with around 160 suppliers because we want to ensure we don’t narrow down supplier choice on the basis of driving the very best price.

“We leave a lot of choice with the clubs. Although what we do is price driven – and it remains a very important part of

our model – clubs want the choice of varying levels of quality and service. Differentiation is vital.

“We’re now seen as the clubs’ first port of call for any purchasing requirement – even for the random one-off requests. Chances are whatever they’re buying for the first time we will have seen somewhere else.

“We do a lot of benchmarking with each club so we understand their expenditure first before we do anything. All that data helps us negotiate the best price across each sector, and advise accordingly.”

In essence, there’s very little that golf clubs need to purchase that Material Matters can’t help with. And the success of the Windlesham Golf Club-based company has seen the development of a new online portal which enables clubs to save time on staff hours in addition to purchasing costs.

“Every golf club has eight or nine very important services delivered to them under quite complex contracts – telephone, insurance, photocopier, hygiene products – which they need help and support with. That’s particularly true in terms of utilities, as energy is a nightmare in terms of how you manage the contracts. We also offer a retrospective review so we can try to recover funds where they’ve been billed incorrectly.

“And we also help them manage energy consumption levels going forward.

“Taking liquid fuel as an example, we have a constant feed of prices so when we get a fuel enquiry we can instantly price it; we don’t need to enquire with four suppliers and, importantly, a member of the golf club’s staff doesn’t spend an hour enquiring with four suppliers.

“Clubs know they’re going to get a volume price and that all the account details, payment etc, are already set up for them. It’s not just a price tool, it’s also a time-saving mechanism.”

The culmination of that combination is the online portal which enables common repeat products to be ordered – at the best price – with the minimum effort and time.

“The portal stands alone, accessed through the Materials Matters website, with each person, within the club, having



a secure log-in, to ensure complete traceability. There are multiple security levels because, obviously, the general manager will want to see everything, while the course manager sees things only relevant to him.

"It enables clubs to manage most aspects of their purchasing at the click of a mouse, so that not only are they saving from a cost perspective but also in terms of staff time. The reduction in man hours is palpable," added Mould.

"By joining Material Matters we have been able to make significant savings across a wide range of areas."

The portal is a complete suite of six, simple to navigate tools offering the ability to keep all important documentation stored online. Ordering is simple and Material Matters offers full support.

Like the company's service, the portal continues to grow organically, and, in 2013, Material Matters is adding merchandise to its portfolio, offering the same level of expertise for shop supplies, such as apparel and golf balls, meaning it can now impact on every area of club purchasing.

And the new portal is proving invaluable to small to medium-sized golf groups with more than two clubs.

"Last year we started work with three golf groups; two in particular have four clubs each – not quite big enough to have a centralised purchasing team but with a

large enough volume to impact on their pricing. But, naturally, they don't have surplus staff or resource to manage it.

"We sit in the centre as the purchasing partner, co-ordinating purchasing activity between their golf clubs to afford them the best position. They retain a local presence, but whenever product can be grouped together we do that and the online portal is ideal for them."

The Material Matters model works equally well for member and proprietary

clubs – the customer base is split 50/50 – and one needs only to speak to some of the customers to see how beneficial it has proved. Peter Hickling, the manager of High Post Golf Club in Wiltshire, said: "By joining Material Matters we have been able to make significant savings across a wide range of areas.

"Plus we know we have total peace of mind that we partner now in every purchasing decision we make, driving up margin and ensuring we have control."

Material Matters mantra when it started three years ago was 'Quality, Service and Price' – it has achieved that and gone a stage further, to be regarded by more than 220 golf clubs as a supplementary team member.

That speaks volumes for an ability to deliver on its promises. **GME**



Incredible Savings

Smarter solutions - driving better products, services and prices for your club

mm
material matters

Consultancy Matters

Practical effective solutions, exceeding expectations



Energy Matters

Pricing, consumption advice and complete contract management



Purchasing Matters

Effective cost reduction across all club areas



Retail Matters

Total online and pro shop merchandise solution



Technology Matters

MM Portal managing your purchasing and contracts online



Marketing Matters

Mobile communication and marketing for your club



Official
Purchasing
Partner of the
UKGCOA

Find out how we can help you in all aspects of your business

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