

## **What to Do When Your Clients Want You**

Do your customers ever ask that you personally get involved in their account?

If so, one of the best things you can do to improve the value of your business (and your life) is to get your employees to treat your customers as well as you do. That's easy to say but hard to do, which is why the story of Ian Fraser is so instructive.

A former pro golfer, Fraser got his start in business by helping elite golfers find the perfect clubs as a master fitter at TaylorMade Europe.

When Fraser launched his own club-fitting business, he quickly realized the necessity of teaching his club-fitting expertise to his employees if he aimed to elevate his company beyond a lifestyle business. Fraser used the following five-step approach to clone himself:

### **1. Master Your Craft on Someone Else's Dime**

Before founding TXG, Fraser had already dedicated most of his professional life to golf. He began playing at 15, and within three years, he had become a scratch golfer. He then spent eight years at TaylorMade Europe, working in various club-fitting roles where he collaborated with some of the biggest names in the PGA in Europe, including Colin Montgomerie, Gary Woodland, Eduardo Molinari, and Chris Wood. In his final role with the company, Fraser designed and operated the TaylorMade Performance Lab at Scotland's world-famous Turnberry golf resort.

Fraser describes himself as "underpaid" while at TaylorMade, but he was content to accept a below-market wage because he had a vision for the company he wanted to start. He knew the insights he was gaining at TaylorMade would assist him in building TXG.

### **2. Think Like Nobu**

Fraser drew inspiration from Nobu, the five-star restaurant chain partly owned by Robert De Niro. Fraser argued that when you visit one of the 50 Nobu restaurants worldwide, you never question who the chef is that night. Nobu has established the benchmark for five-star dining, so you're assured that regardless of the chef or location, you will have a fine dining experience. Fraser utilized the Nobu example to communicate his vision to his team of club fitters.

### **3. Hire for EQ, Not IQ**

Fraser aimed to establish a customer experience company that happened to fit golf clubs, as opposed to a golf-fitting business that offered good customer service. That's why he prioritized EQ over IQ when hiring TXG staff. "I can teach you to fit a golf club," Fraser argues, "but I can't teach you to be a good person."

Fraser implemented a behavioral interview question to identify the right candidates. He presented potential interviewees with a scenario that offered two choices: one that would benefit the client and another that would provide short-term gains to the company at the expense of the client. Candidates who opted for short-term profit over doing what was right for the customer were eliminated from consideration.

#### **4. Teach Your Employees Through Osmosis**

Most golf-fitting studios are private offices where the fitter works one on one with a player. Fraser, however, wanted to observe his apprentices at work and wanted them to learn from his interactions with clients. Therefore, he designed his location with three open-concept bays. He worked from the middle bay so his apprentices could overhear his client interactions and he could listen in on their client conversations as well.

Fraser contended that being physically close to his employees accelerated their learning curve more than any other technique he tried.

#### **5. Broadcast Your Expertise**

Fraser established a YouTube channel where he provided club-fitting advice for free. The channel amassed 216,000 subscribers. Fraser understood that only one percent of his subscribers would ever step foot in a TXG store, but the channel reinforced TXG's reputation as the world's best club fitters. Additionally, it transformed his marketing strategy from a cost into a profit center as the channel generated over \$300,000 per year in advertising revenue, which Fraser reinvested in growth.

When asked if he was concerned about divulging his "secret sauce" in the YouTube videos, Fraser referred to celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay. He reasoned that Ramsay shares his recipes in cookbooks, but this doesn't make people any less likely to visit his restaurants.

By implementing an innovative hiring process and utilizing a creative teaching approach, Fraser succeeded in expanding Tour Experience Golf (TXG) to a team of 14 employees, developing a YouTube fan base of over 200,000 subscribers, and generating revenue exceeding \$3 million. In 2022 TXG was acquired by Club Champion, the largest club-fitting company in the United States, with more than 100 locations.