



## ***Augusta National Golf Club*** ***Membership for Women or Staying the Course?***

### TEACHING NOTE

#### **Purpose of the Case Study**

1. To provide students with an example of the communications aspects of a private entity fending off influence from an outside group;
2. To encourage students to think about how they would approach the situation from the perspectives of the various stakeholders;
3. To help students understand the importance of communication during a prolonged conflict;

#### **Identifying the Business Problem**

Martha Burk of the NCWO sent a letter to William Johnson of the Augusta National Golf Club urging him to admit a female member to the club. He denied the request and he released the television sponsors from their commitment so that Burke could not make targets out of them. The estimated advertising revenue lost would be \$7 million. Augusta National can probably withstand this loss for a certain period in the near term. Clearly, they would prefer not to. The long-term viability of the brand is at stake, and worthwhile community and national charity causes may end up being the real victims.

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This case was prepared by Research Assistants Ray B. Swart, Ashish K. Singh, and Andrew Nelson under the direction of James S. O'Rourke, Concurrent Professor of Management, as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation.

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- 2、对学员采用1对1顾问式教学指导，确保学员顺利完成学业、胸有成竹的走向领导岗位；
- 3、互动学习：专家、顾问24小时接受在线教学辅导+每年度集中面授辅导



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## **Forecasting the Most Desirable Outcome**

Augusta National and the NCWO make a quiet, non-public agreement whereby the NCWO will ease their pressure and Augusta will agree to admit a female member before the 2003 Masters Tournament. Both sides agree to make no public announcement when this occurs.

## **Identifying the Critical Issues**

These issues are at the heart of the Augusta Case:

1. Protecting a private entity's right to run its own business within the limits of the law and community standards.
2. Should a private club that hosts such a "public" event, be held to different standards than other private organizations?
3. Addressing the social issue of gender equality.
4. Managing corporate reputation and stakeholder contacts via the mass media.
5. Engaging in communications under close media scrutiny over a prolonged period of time

## **Listing the Possible Solutions to the Business Problem**

We can learn from this case how both sides could have handled the situation differently. Ms. Burk could have taken more time to learn about Augusta and the Masters. She does not seem to have a sense of awareness of the history of either the club or the tournament. She could have tried to arrange private meetings and conversations with Mr. Johnson to discuss her concerns. Once a relationship was established, she could have made a private request to Mr. Johnson to admit a female member and see how he would have reacted.

Mr. Johnson could have brought Ms. Burk to Augusta or met her at another location to discuss the matter privately. Perhaps he could have explained to Ms. Burk why her request was not something that was going to happen immediately, but it was under advisement with the leaders of the club. He also could have explained that Augusta only invites new members when another member leaves or dies, and that admitting a female would be considered at that time. He certainly did not have to sound so defensive in his response.

## **Explaining How to Communicate the Solution**

Both sides would have been served better to keep the media out of this debate. Private meetings and discussions would have been the best method to communicate with each other because then both sides could have talked openly and honestly without worrying about how each would appear to outsiders.

## **Teaching the Case**

### One Week Prior

Distribute Part A of the case at least one lesson before going over it in class. Inform the students that they will be discussing many issues including:

- Dealing with external stakeholders trying to influence your organization.
- How a special interest group should go about influencing policies.
- Analyzing the business issues in a sports-oriented case.
- The importance of being able to effectively communicate via the media.

### First 30 minutes of Class

Initially, review the facts of the case in Part A. After a few minutes, have the students identify the following:

- The critical issues
- The stakeholders
- Possible solutions from this point forward
- What can be learned

### Summarize Their Response

Ask students for their opinions of how the issues could have been resolved in a more rational manner. Items for discussion include:

- Objectives: What should each stakeholder be trying to accomplish?
- Audience: To whom should each side be trying to communicate?
- Message: How should these ideas be communicated to the various audiences?
- Media: By what medium should the messages be delivered?
- Results: How will each side know if they have been successful?

### Last 15 Minutes of Class

Distribute Part B of the Case.

End the discussion by talking about the implications of Part B.

### **Timeline of Events**

<b>April, 2002</b>	Lloyd Ward, an African-American member of Augusta National Golf Club, comments that he would work from within Augusta National to lobby for women membership. Of the matter, he says, "Inclusion does not just mean people of color.
<b>June 12, 2002</b>	A letter is sent from Martha Burk, Chair of the National Council of Women's Organizations to William Johnson, Chairman of the Augusta National Golf Club requesting Augusta to open its membership to women.
<b>July 8, 2002</b>	Mr. Johnson sends a brief reply to Ms. Burk.
<b>July 9, 2002</b>	Mr. Johnson issues a press release with rather harsh words directed at Ms. Burk and the NCWO.
<b>July 30, 2002</b>	The NCWO sends letters to the C.E.O.'s of each of the television sponsors (Citigroup, Coca-Cola, General Motors and IBM) of the Masters television broadcast asking them to suspend their sponsorship of the tournament. A letter is also sent to Tim Finchem, Commissioner of the PGA, requesting that the PGA withdraw recognition of any kind from the Masters Golf Tournament.
<b>August 15, 2002</b>	Rick Singer, Director of Worldwide Sponsorship Marketing for IBM, sends a response letter to Ms. Burk indicating that IBM will continue to sponsor the tournament.
<b>August 20, 2002</b>	The NCWO sends a follow up letter to the C.E.O. of IBM saying that Mr. Singer's response did not address points made in the NCWO's original letter.
<b>August 20, 2002</b>	Mr. Finchem sends a response letter indicating that the PGA will continue to recognize the Masters as a Major Championship.

- August 22, 2002** Leah C. Johnson, Director of Public Affairs for Citigroup, says that they are communicating their views privately with Augusta National.
- August 30, 2002** A press release issued by Mr. Johnson states that since Augusta National is the NCWO's true target, he will not request the participation of the television sponsors during the 2003 tournament. Instead, the event will be conducted by the Masters Tournament.
- August 31, 2002** Ms. Burk says the NCWO will now direct its attention to CBS.
- September 18, 2002** Ms. Burk sends a letter to Sean McManus, President of CBS Sports, asking CBS to suspend broadcasting the Masters.
- September 19, 2002** The NCWO issues a press release about its letter to CBS. Mr. McManus responds by saying that CBS will continue to broadcast the Masters.
- September 26, 2002** Ms. Burk begins sending letters to C.E.O.'s who are reportedly members of Augusta asking how they can be members of a club that discriminates against women which is contrary to the policies they have in their own companies. 55 members are targeted.
- October 5, 2002** About 20 Augusta members are concerned about the approach that Mr. Johnson is taking and Sanford Weill, C.E.O. of Citigroup, issues a statement through Leah C. Johnson, that he favors opening up Augusta's membership to women.
- October 8, 2002** Lloyd Ward sends a letter to Ms. Burk offering his support for women membership.
- October 17, 2002** Ms. Burk and the NCWO plan to next target sponsors of other PGA tournaments.
- November 12, 2002** Mr. Johnson's Q & A session with John Boyette, sports editor of *The August Chronicle*, is released along with a statement by Mr. Johnson that appears in *The Wall Street Journal* reaffirming the club's membership policies. Ms. Burk states that they will continue to pursue the issue.

### **Discussion Questions for (A) Case**

1. What are the basic business issues in the case?



2. Should August National admit women members? If so, when? Who would be likely candidates for such membership?
3. Who are the key stakeholders other than those mentioned?
4. Should the NCWO continue to press this issue? If so, how? Are Martha Burk's strident tactics likely to alienate any of her key constituents?
5. What are the possible ramifications for both Augusta National and the NCWO?
6. What problems might prominent members (CEOs) of Augusta face?
7. What other courses of action could have been pursued by key individuals?

Hand out (B) case, provide sufficient time for students to read it, and then begin a discussion of the information it adds to the case.