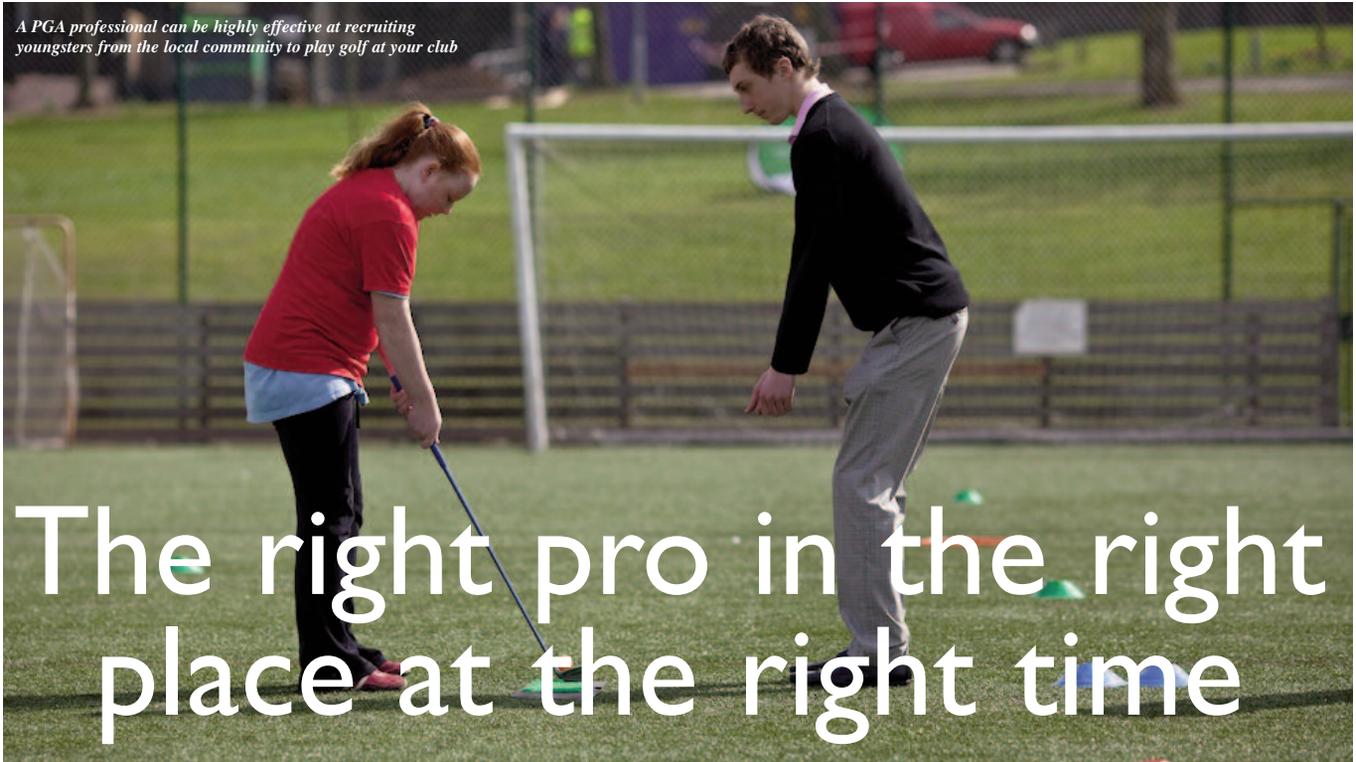


*A PGA professional can be highly effective at recruiting youngsters from the local community to play golf at your club*



# The right pro in the right place at the right time

One of the reasons why a PGA professional can offer a golf club so much is due to the education-led structure of the association, as **David Colclough** details

In 1901, the year The PGA was formed, it's been documented that a typical PGA member might be found playing or teaching; making and repairing clubs and golf balls; being a keeper of the greens; steward or caddie-master, amongst other things. At Muswell Hill GC, the professional (Thomas Winton) was even charged with looking after the club's horses!

A century (or so) later, and things have certainly changed in regards to some of the roles of a PGA professional. Recent research into the PGA database tells us that although many members will have gone through the same type of initial PGA training programme, they are plying their trade in a number of different ways now.

What you will find in this article is although the membership of The PGA is made up of individuals commonly referred to as 'PGA professionals', not all PGA professionals are the same when one considers the type of skills and knowledge they have, their successes and achievements, ongoing commitment to further education and training, PGA membership classifications and so on.

The PGA is committed to ensuring that the relationship between the PGA professional and an employer (or employer) is a productive and proactive one, which is profitable for both parties, and this article attempts to provide readers with some insight, and a starting point for employing or deploying 'the Right Pro, in the Right Place, at the Right Time'.

## The 'jobs market'

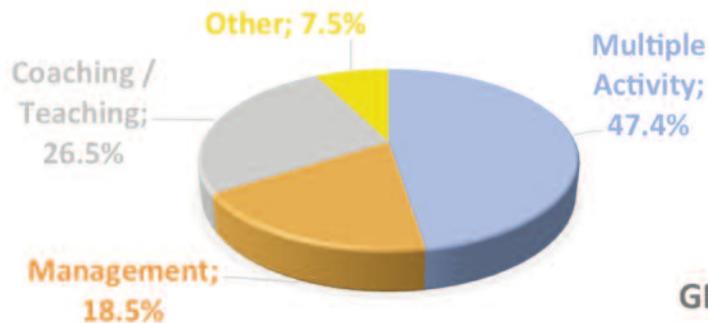
Within Great Britain and Ireland there are three distinct roles where 90 percent of PGA members carry out their duties. The majority of members are employed in a 'multiple activity' role, either as a

club professional, head professional or qualified assistant professional (47.4 percent).

Close to 30 percent make their living predominantly from teaching and coaching the game (26.5 percent) and an ever increasing number, almost 20 percent of the PGA membership, is now involved in the management of the golf club (18.5 percent).

The remaining 7.5 percent are either playing for a living, involved in the administration of the game, or working within the golf industry for golf related companies (such as Ping).

To gain some further insight in to some of these roles, I would recommend



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reviewing the *PGA Role Descriptors* document that is freely available on the PGA Website at [www.pga.info](http://www.pga.info).

There you can find descriptors which begin to highlight key responsibilities of PGA members who are undertaking those roles, broken down into key areas such as:

- Strategy
- Golf operations
- People management
- Financial management
- Marketing
- Customer Service.

As well as examples of:

- Personal attributes
- Qualifications and experience.

They are designed to provide employers or deployers of those individuals with the makings of a role or job description.

## Employment status

Our research also demonstrates that one employment model does not fit all job roles. Indeed there is a significant variation in employment status across the three main categories.

Currently those members in 'multiple activity' roles are still more likely to be self-employed (70 percent) than employed (30 percent). That is even more likely if a PGA member is predominantly involved in 'teaching or coaching' where 93 percent are self-employed versus seven percent who are employed.

However, those in management roles are far more likely to be employed (78 percent versus 22 percent) by the club or facility.

## Recognising success in the workplace

Success in these roles is recognised by the PGA through its 'Accreditation of Professional Achievement and Learning' (APAL). Members submit an application which is assessed against a set of criteria which is available to be viewed within the 'Industry Guide to PGA Membership' (also at [www.pga.info](http://www.pga.info)).

To ensure impartiality, the APAL Council (which assesses these applications) includes within it, representatives from The R&A, the golf industry and the education sector, as well as successful PGA members in their own right.

Whilst being a qualified PGA



professional still make up just less than 90 percent of the total membership, a growing number are submitting an APAL application and are being assessed to have developed their day to day working practice to a point where they have been awarded one of four advanced membership designations:

- PGA Advanced Professional – 315 (5.7 percent)
- PGA Fellow Professional – 176 (3.2 percent)
- PGA Advanced Fellow Professional – 52 (0.9 percent)
- PGA Master Professional – 38 (0.7 percent).

## Further education and training (CPD)

As previously stated, to achieve these higher levels of PGA membership, members need to evidence their ability to carry out their role in golf to a level where it can be clearly identified that they succeeding in delivering 'better than average' results than would be expected of a PGA professional.

In evidencing this, it is often clear to see a link between the individual's ability to work at a higher level and their approach to ongoing personal and professional development (CPD/ life long learning), undertaken once they have become qualified.

In learning to be a better PGA professional, about half of those will have engaged in the further education offered by the association, whilst the other half will have undertaken education and training relevant to them with another provider. In the latter instance, the PGA then accredits that learning if the member can demonstrate the relevance of the learning to either their current role, or a future role where a requirement for greater knowledge and skill is needed.

Members meeting the criteria of

completing sufficient CPD activity are recognised with a Class AA membership, whilst those who have not evidenced sufficient commitment to further education are given a Class A membership category. This is re-graded on an annual basis.

## Piecing this all together

• So given all these variables (and there will be others!), how do you set about employing 'the Right Pro, in the Right Place, at the Right Time'?

• What do we even mean by having 'the Right Pro, in the Right Place, at the Right Time'?

To answer the second question first, you have the 'Right Pro, in the Right Place, at the Right Time' when:

"The competencies, behaviours & attitudes of the PGA Professional are utilised to maximise the revenues that can be generated from the facilities, to help meet or exceed business drivers (or KPIs) identified by the golf facility (& the PGA Professional)"

Individual case studies published in this magazine over recent years have highlighted what a great asset a good PGA professional can be to their golf club or facility when their competencies, behaviours and attitude are aligned with the business drivers of the facilities where they work, to maximise revenues for both the golf facility and PGA professional.

To work that through means that employers and deployers of PGA professionals need to do some 'due diligence' to review what they need, and then communicating that effectively either to the current, or in-coming professional. That can be challenging to some, and is why the PGA works with clubs to help them identify what might be possible on a case by case basis.

PGA business relationship officers are well placed to support the process of reviewing what might be possible, using their knowledge of various models of good (and poor) practice from across the club industry. (For more information, you can also review last month's article).

So if you want to ensure you have 'the Right Pro, in the Right Place, at the Right Time' please keep this article close to hand, visit the PGA website, or call to speak to a PGA business relationship officer on 01675 470333. **GCM**

David Colclough MPhil is the PGA's head of Member Education and is a PGA Advanced Fellow Professional