

Meeting of Merchandising Minds

PGA Magazine Merchandisers of the Year Conference to feature guest speaker Jaynie Smith, plus PGA Award winner presentations

By Tony L. Starks

The sixth annual *PGA Magazine* Merchandisers of the Year Conference, scheduled for the Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate on Jan. 18-20, will bring together some of the greatest merchandising minds among the ranks of PGA members. Attendees will include Section and national Merchandisers of the Year, past and present. Golf industry leaders will take part in thought-provoking discussions and insightful presentations on successful merchandising and cutting-edge sales strategies to prepare for the 2013 golf season. The *PGA Magazine* Merchandisers of the Year Conference is presented in partnership with 5-hour Energy, Cutter & Buck, KBS Shafts, the Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate, Ping, The PGA of America and Pukka Headwear.

New to the MOY Conference agenda for 2013 is the presentation of the national 2012 PGA Merchandisers of the Year Awards for private, resort and public facilities. Taking home the award in the private category will be George Kahrhoff of The Country Club at Castle Pines in Castle Rock, Colo.; the resort recipient is Amy Pendergast of Bandon (Ore.) Dunes Golf Resort; and the public category goes to Dale Smigelsky of Collindale Golf Club in Fort Collins, Colo.

"I've attended Merchandisers of the Year Conferences in the past, and it's always beneficial to meet with fellow PGA Professionals who are at the top of their field," says Pendergast, the PGA head professional at Bandon Dunes. "The sharing of ideas and best practices is a great learning experience. Regardless of our accomplishments, you're never too successful to learn."

A special presentation from author and business consultant Jaynie Smith will provide attendees with an opportunity to learn even more about successful merchandising strategies. Smith is the author of the best-selling business books "Creating Competitive Advantage" and "Relevant Selling," as well as founder and president of Smart Advantage, Inc., a marketing consultancy focused exclusively on helping companies identify and communicate their competitive advantages in marketing and sales. Her business knowledge and expertise has helped countless companies – from Fortune 500s to small, localized operations – find new ways to grow and enhance their business.

Corporate consultant and best-selling author Jaynie Smith will deliver the keynote presentation to Conference attendees.



A key element of Smith's business philosophy is creating a strong value proposition for customers. To succeed at that, Smith explains that you must first identify your target market, understand what your customers value and then deliver relevant messages that communicate precisely how well you perform at the very things they value.

"Many companies have a difficult time identifying what their customer values. I call those 'blind spots,'" says Smith. "For instance, one of our clients owned a lot of commercial buildings but they had a blind spot in terms of what tenants looked for when renting. When we conducted surveys of the tenants and returned with the research, they were literally shocked to find out the most important thing to their tenants was security. The company invested a great deal in security, but they never 'sold it.'"

"We see that a lot. Companies often invest both dollars and time in the things that their customers want, but they often fail to talk about what investments they have on behalf of the customer."

This will be the subject of Smith's presentation – titled "Are You Selling What Your Customers Want Most? 95 Percent of All Companies Are Not" – during the 2013 *PGA Magazine* Merchandisers of the Year Conference.

"We haven't worked with golf-specific industries in the past, but our business practices have been successful for hundreds of different industries," says Smith. "I'm excited to bring our vast findings, supported by more than 20 years of experience, to PGA Professionals and the golf industry at the upcoming Merchandisers of the Year Conference." ■

2013 PGA Magazine MOY Conference

When: Jan. 18-20, 2013

Where: Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate (Fla.)

Who: Current national and Section PGA Merchandiser of the Year award winners, top AGM merchandisers, industry VIPs

Sponsors: 5-hour Energy, Cutter & Buck, KBS Shafts, the Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate, Ping, The PGA of America, Pukka Headwear