



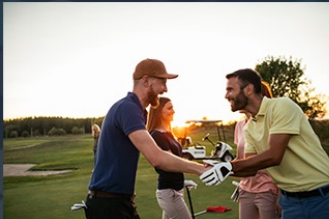
# GOLF BUSINESS CONFERENCE 2026



HIGHLIGHTS FROM

## GOLF CONSUMER OUTLOOK FOR '26

JANUARY 2026 • ORLANDO



Prepared by: **SPORTS &  
LEISURE**  
RESEARCH GROUP



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## Key Consumer Trends That Will Impact Golf in 2026

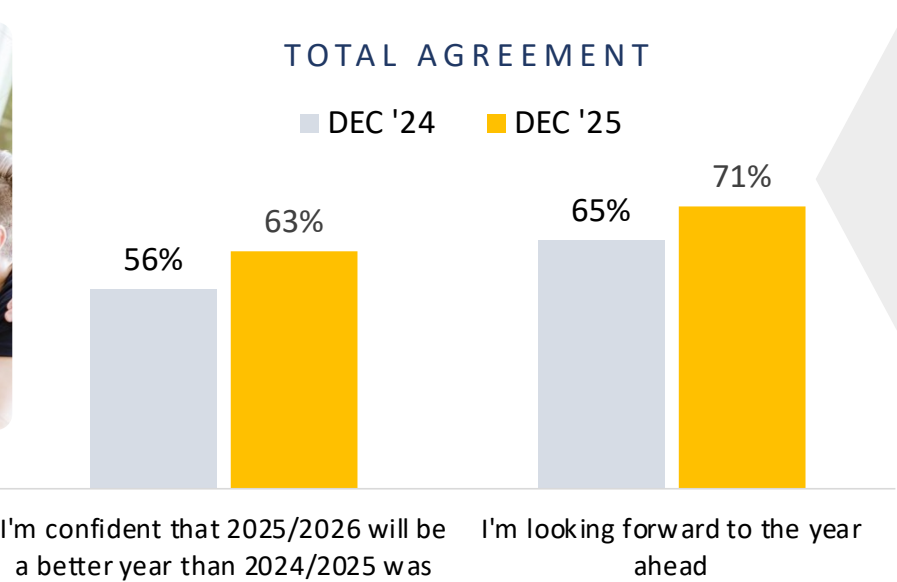


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Q. Looking ahead, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.



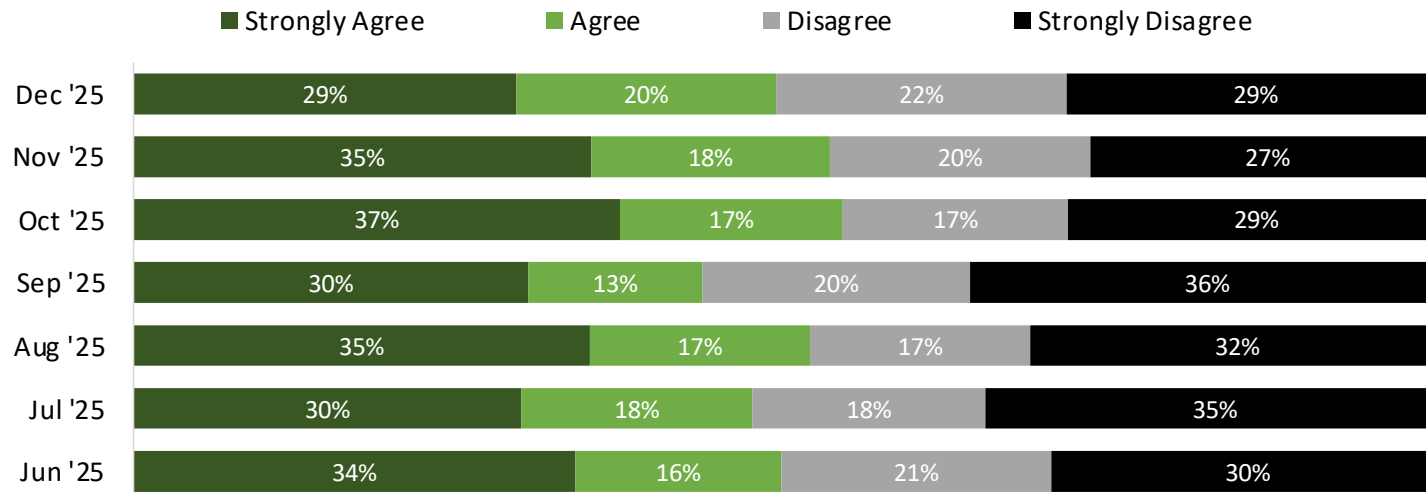
Democrat	68%
Republican	78%
Independent	69%
Age 25-34	77%
Age 35-44	73%
Age 45-64	66%
Age 65+	62%

- Yet only 42% agree that “Things are better now than they were before COVID.”



Q. Looking ahead, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

*I believe that the cost of every day goods will improve in the coming months.*



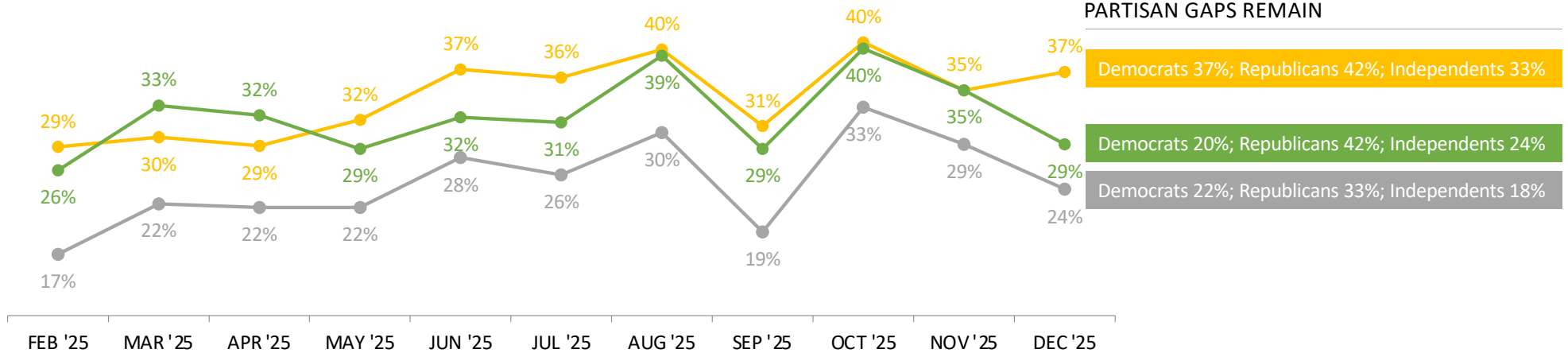


TOP 3 BOX AGREEMENT — TOTAL

— I am better off now than I was four years ago

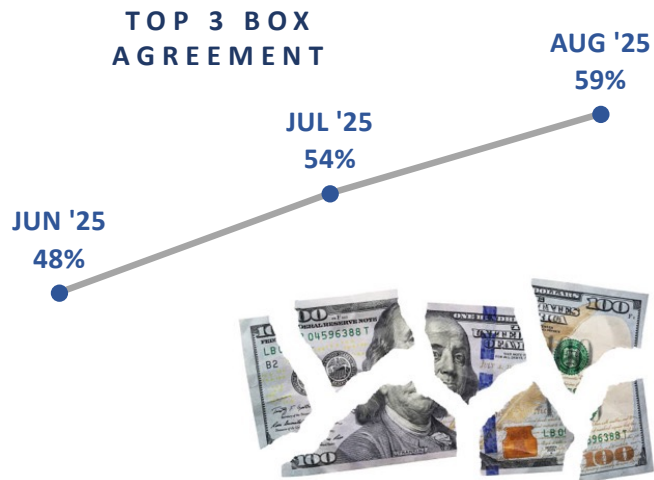
— America is better off now than it was four years ago

— Most of my neighbors are better off now than they were four years ago

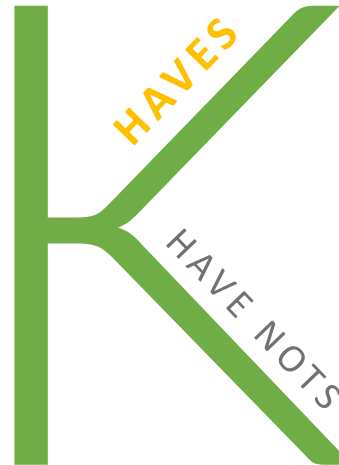




*Economic realities are creating a greater gap between the wealthiest and poorest Americans.*



We are Living in a K shaped Economy



*America has increasingly become a society of financial haves and have nots.*

TOP 3 BOX AGREEMENT





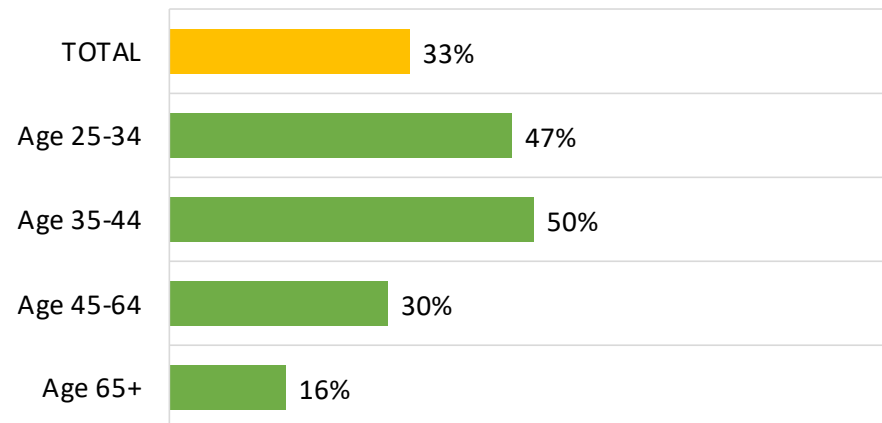


➡ Estimated **\$106 Trillion** in Wealth Transferred Between Generations by 2048

*I have inherited or expect to inherit a meaningful amount of money in my lifetime.*



TOTAL AGREEMENT



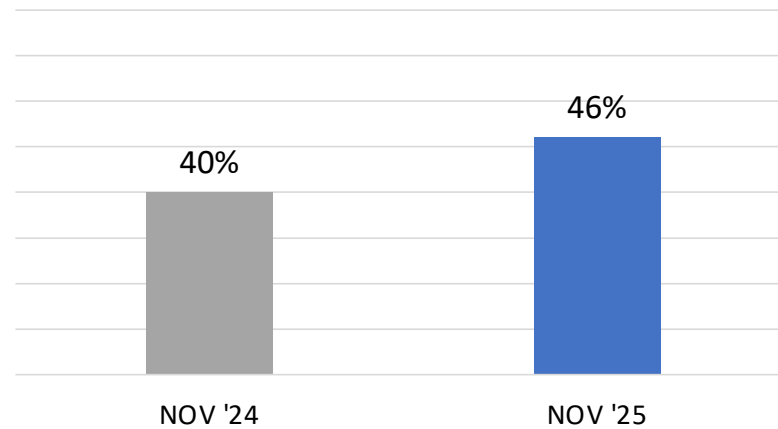
➤ 45% agree that they have been financing their credit card payments, more these days than they did a year ago...up from 33% in February

Q. Looking ahead, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

***Making time to enjoy leisure activities is more important to me now than it was two years ago.***



TOP 3 BOX AGREEMENT



► **65%** expect to devote more time to leisure activities in 2026 than they did a year earlier





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We are at an Incredible Inflection Point....

## From The Golfer's Perspective: A Tale of Dichotomous Demand

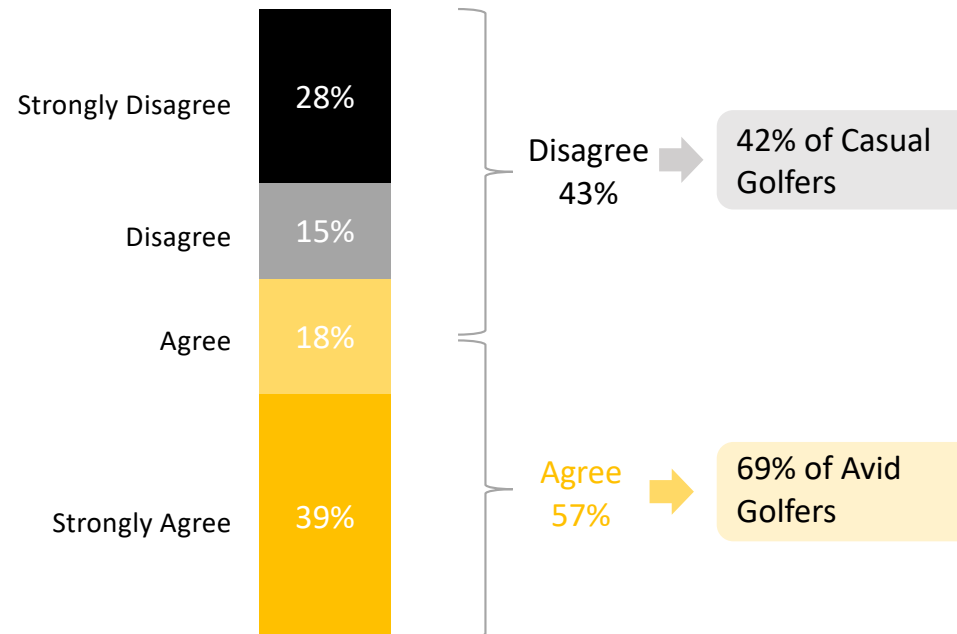


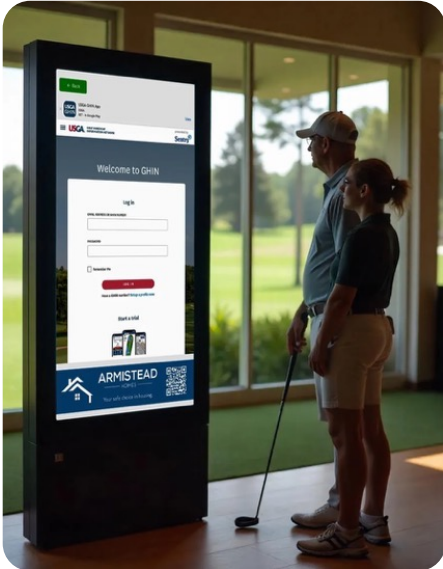
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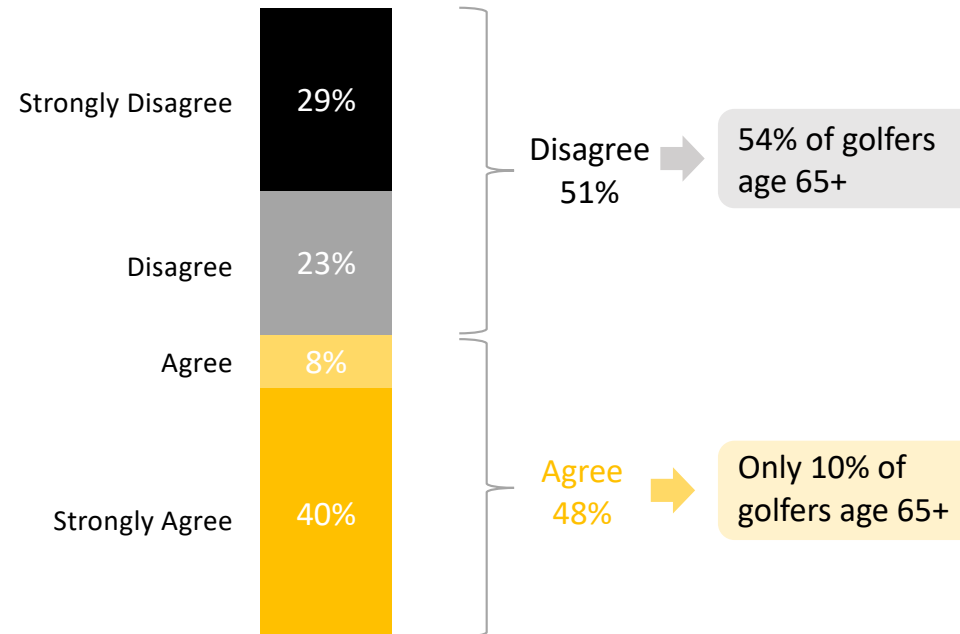


*I enjoy receiving personal attention from the golf staff at my home course.*





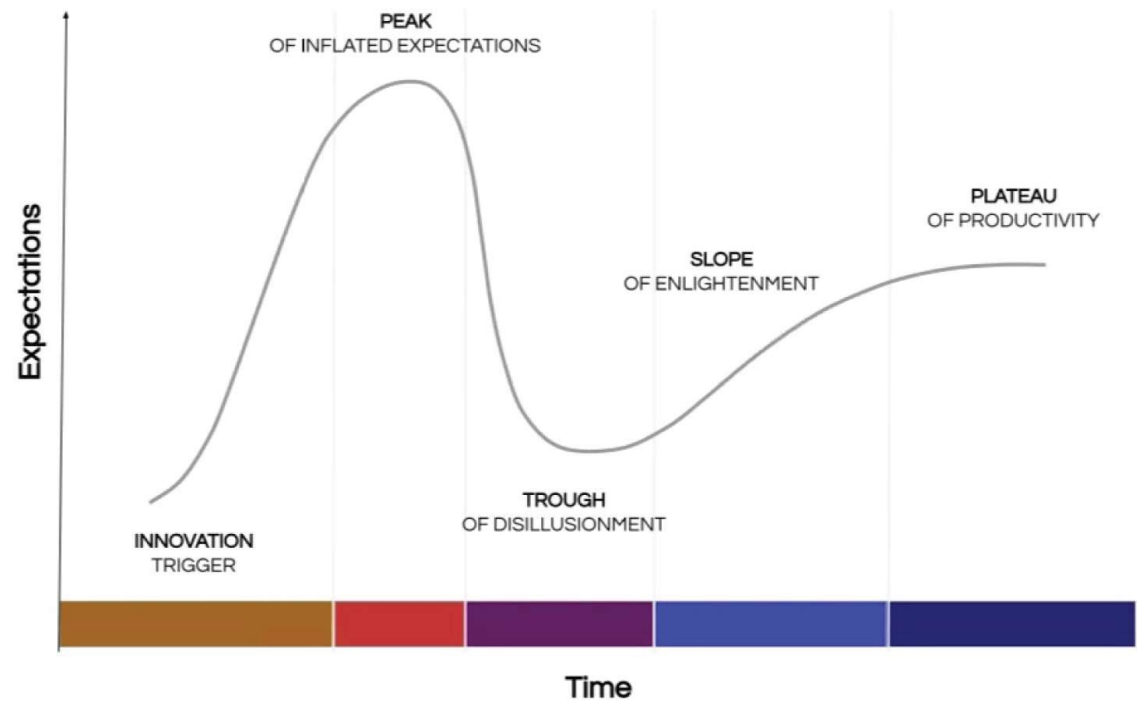
*When I play golf, I'd prefer proceeding directly to the first tee, rather than having to check in.*





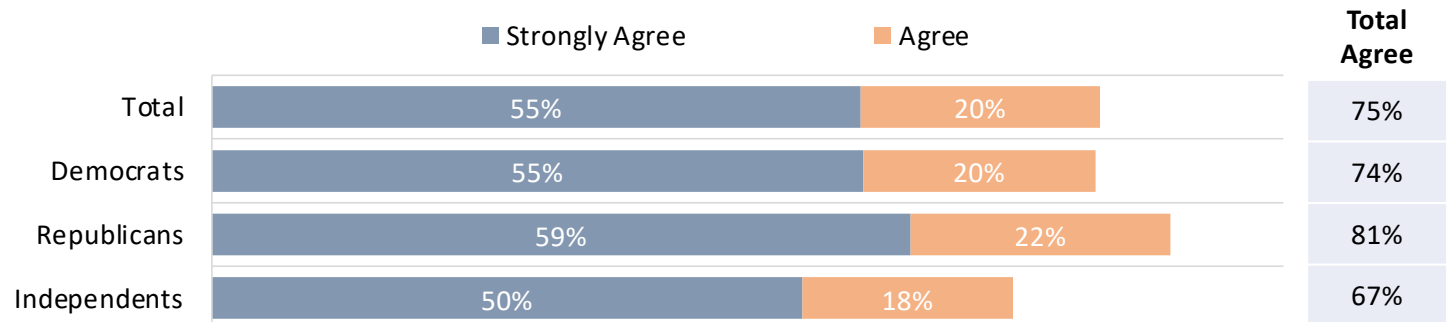


## Gartner Hype Cycle

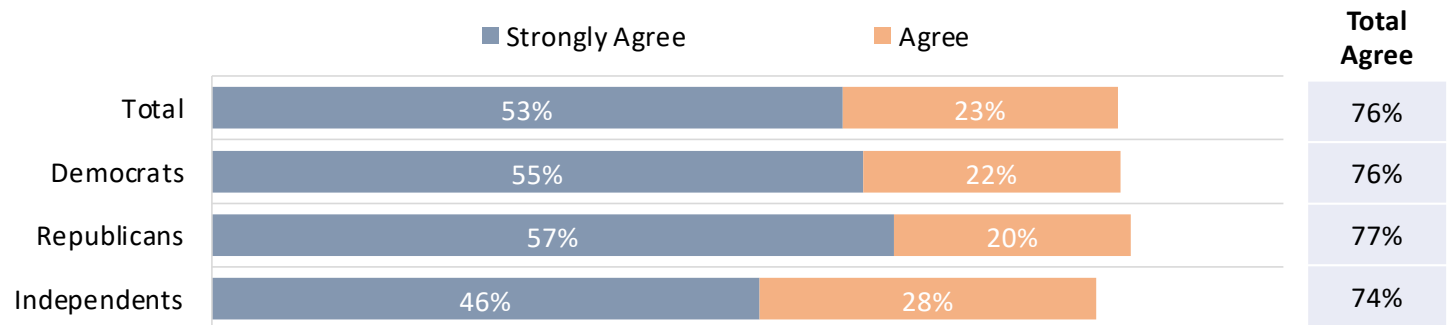




***We need more government oversight of the development and diffusion of AI.***



***The government should take active steps to regulate Artificial Intelligence (AI).***









## EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Just a third strongly prefer to buy things through a digital app than in a store... only **24%** of those over age 45

**Less than Half** strongly prefer making reservations through an app

Just over **1/3 strongly agree** that it's more convenient to handle customer service issues through an app

**47%** of Americans often feel "very lonely"...**63%** of those age 35-44



## EXPERIENCES

Those who strongly agree that **"It's important for my life to include a number of unique experiences"** has **risen +14** points from December'24 to December'25...to **53%**

Significantly stronger agreement among younger adults



## EAGERNESS

From November'24 to November'25, those strongly agreeing that **"My life philosophy is more about living for today than it is about living for tomorrow"** has gone from **57% to 66%**

**78%** of Americans agree with the statement: **"I need a vacation"**



## ENTITLEMENT

**80%** of Americans agree that they deserve a vacation; **87%** of those under age 45

The incidence of those who feel that they have been passed over for a promotion at work for someone less qualified than they are is **up +10** points in the past year, to **41%**...A Majority of those under age 45

**4/5 believe** that **"People are more in it for themselves than they were twenty years ago."**

**More than 75%** agree that **"People today are more selfish"** than in their parents' generation





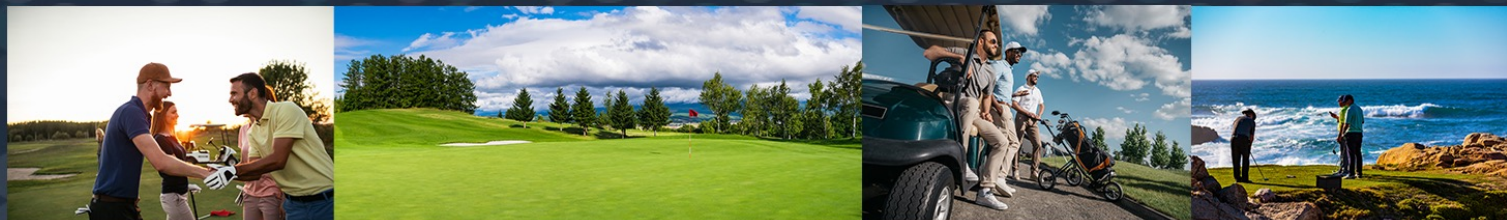
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## Golf Specific Attitudes and Trend Updates

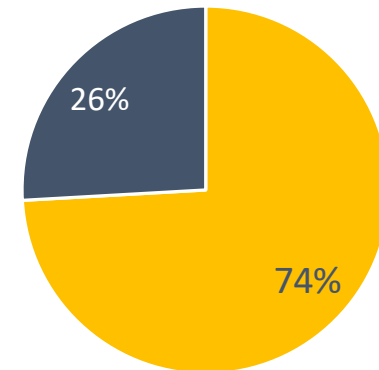




Q. Which of the following best reflects your opinion on booking advanced tee times on a golf related app, website or GPS device?



- I'm comfortable putting down an advance deposit on my booked tee time
- I'd prefer to only reserve the tee time and then pay at the golf facility

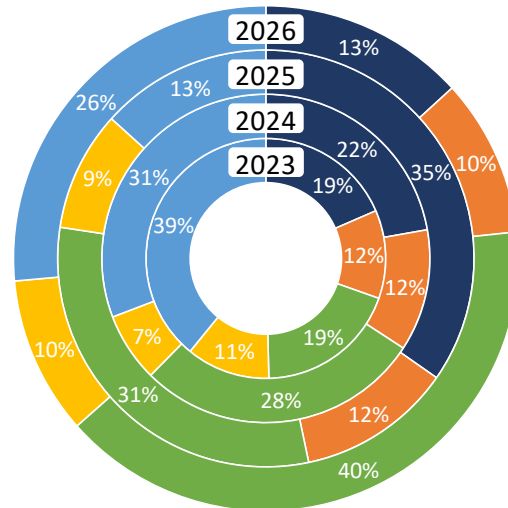


Comfort level is largely correlated with golfer age.

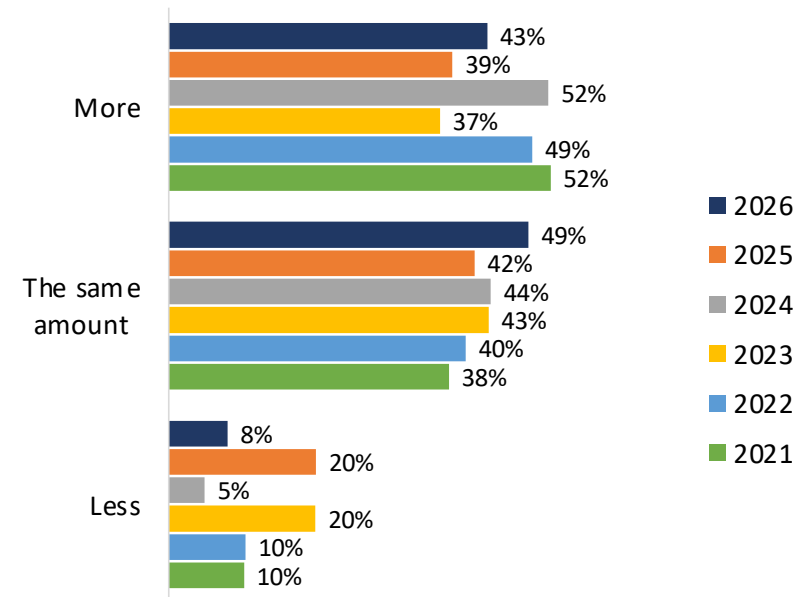




- I did not purchase any golf equipment last year and do not anticipate purchasing any this year
- I did not purchase any golf equipment last year but plan to purchase some this year
- My golf equipment purchases this year will be about the same as they were last year
- I will buy less golf equipment this year than I did last year
- I will buy more golf equipment this year than I did last year

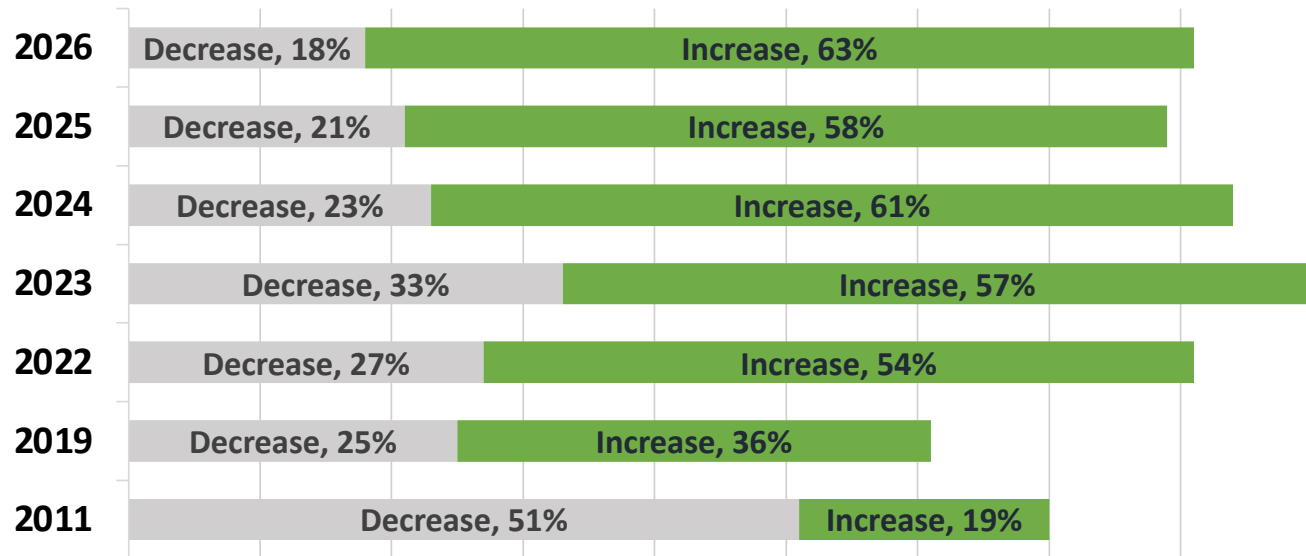


Q. Overall, compared to 2025 do you expect that your 2026 total golf related spending for equipment and apparel will be:





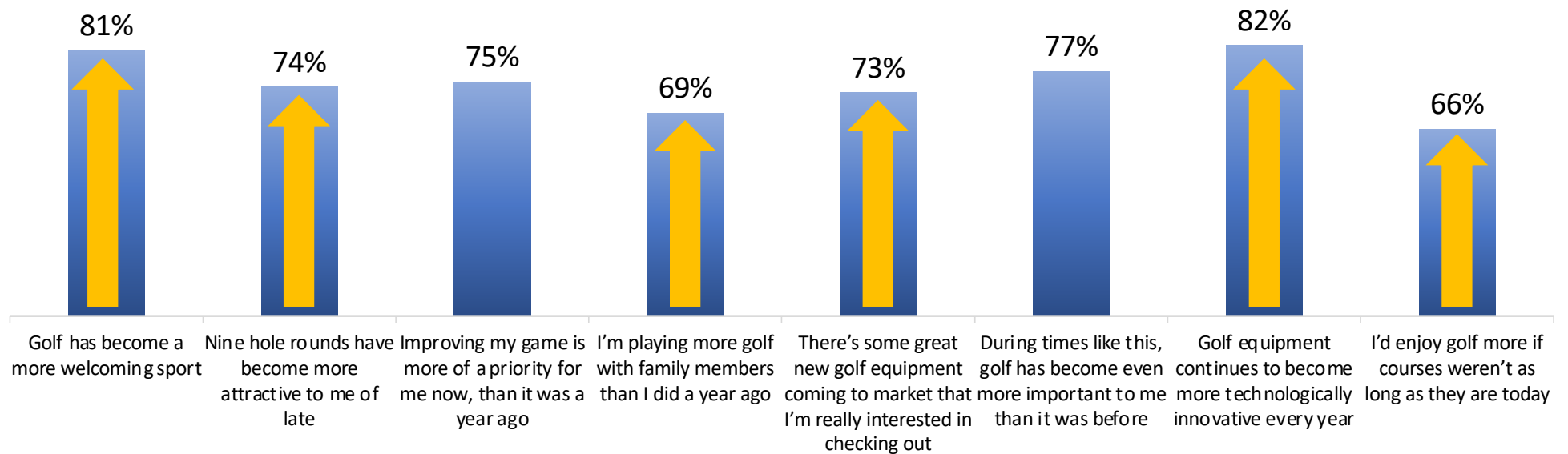
## MEMBERSHIP GROWTH UPDATE



➤ **28%** report maintaining a waiting list...off directionally from last year



TOTAL AGREEMENT



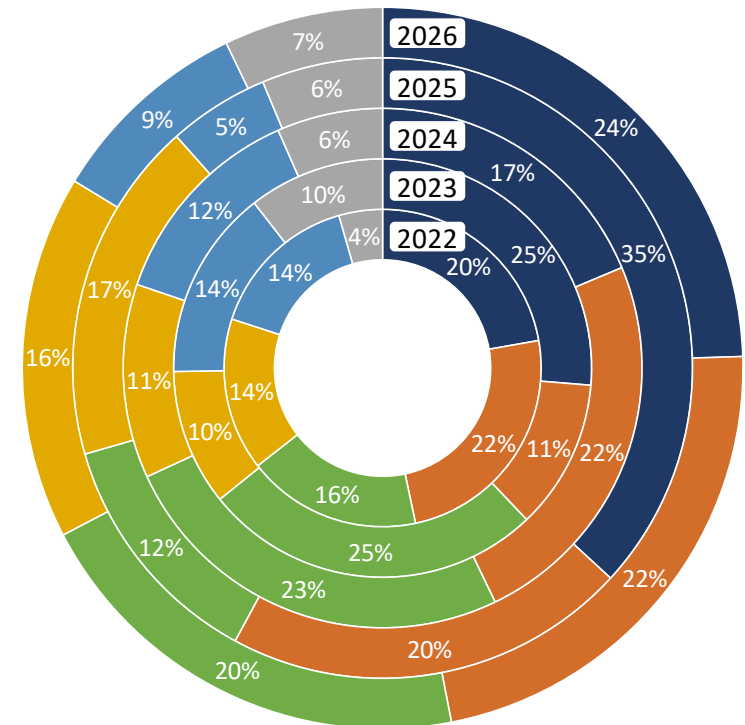




Q. Where are you most likely to make your next golf equipment purchase?



- Sporting Goods Store
- Golf Specialty Store
- Green Grass Shop
- Over the Internet
- Mass Merchandiser
- Warehouse Club





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## Key Trends from Facility Owners and Operators: A First Directional Look







### Rates & Revenue

Another Great Year has Concluded

Continued upward trend is flattening/waiting for the other shoe to drop

Growing Initiation Fees, Dues and Development at the high end

Legitimate concerns at the lower end and entry points

Greater Tolerance for Advance deposits and No-Show Fees

**BEST PRACTICES:** Yield Management/dynamic pricing and formal hyper local price elasticity analysis; Being mindful of the lower end



### Labor and Operations

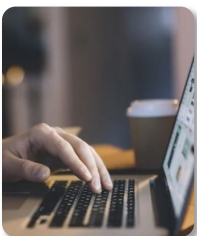
Catching up with competitive hourly rates

Under attack by minimum wage positions with better work/life balance

Insurance pressures

Rising fleet costs

**BEST PRACTICES:** Empowerment, stretching comfort zones, automation to bring staff forward to customer facing roles



### Automation & Technology

Everyone's new toy

Still lagging on integration of disparate systems

Future panacea for agronomy, though costs must come down

The High Tech vs High Touch conundrum

**BEST PRACTICES:** Back-office integration, meeting the customer where they are





### Agronomy

Autonomous mowers for tees and fairways-- cost/benefits vs guest issues

Regulatory pressures unabating for water and pesticide usage

Moisture monitors are game changers

Stabilization in cost of implements but not with equipment leases

**BEST PRACTICES:** Proactive infrastructure investment, water focus, find efficiencies, continued emphasis on the green complex; BMPs at the facility level



### Capital Improvements

Making up for lost time

Meeting the needs of an evolving customer base

F&B Remains a hotbed of innovation

Gamified Ranges approaching Saturation Point?

**BEST PRACTICES:** Seize the day



### Marketing

The death of mass media—One to One Selling and targeting as data becomes more prevalent and accessible

Message emphasis on relationships, “edutainment”, irreverence and softer selling

Automation for efficiency

Targeting AI agents vs SEO

Fostering community and relationships as an opportunity

Keeping it fun: proper tee box selection, derivatives

**Best Practices:** Heightened customer centricity and segmentation; differentiation against a broader competitive set of leisure options



### Long Term Considerations

Exuberant Valuations

The flood of outside capital and PE’s ROI Time horizons

Revenue Continuing to trend up

Further Consolidation and the growing importance of scale on inventory distribution and service delivery

Supply/Demand Equilibrium...but for how long?