

Disruptive innovations in golf essay

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I will also explain the disruptions along the way that molded the game into what it is today and which ones can be held responsible for explosion of popularity in the 1500s, 1600s and 1700s. From there, we will take a look at the state of the game as it is today and try to make some theory based predictions on the future of golf. To set the stage, the invention of golf is widely attributed to the Scottish sometime in the 15th century.

In its infancy, it is a far cry from the game we are used to today. The early game was simply played with sticks, hard leather balls and gopher holes. In fact, the game encountered non market interference before it even had a chance to innovate. In 1507, the Scottish Parliament passed several acts banning the practice of the game. (History of Golf) Parliament cited national security as the game was interfering with archery practice, which was needed for the defense of the country. When the ban was lifted in 1507, the game saw marginal improvement over the next couple hundred years. Different materials were experimented with for clubs and balls.

While these were improvements to the game they could not sustain innovation as they did nothing to reach the non-privileged. From its inception until the innovations of the 1700s, golf remained the domain of the more privileged. It required a high level of skill and time to play. This was especially true considering the equipment at the time. Some of the disruptions that began to change this in the 18th century brought numerous changes and technological innovations to the game of golf. The rubber core ball is introduced, adding at least In 1905, the first dimpled ball is made, decreasing drag and increasing control. Steel shafts were first used in 1910, replacing ash and hickory. Although these were again improvements to the game that made it easier, they still were not appealing enough

to reach the non-mentioned them because they would lay the ground work for late would appeal to millions of non-consumers. If we consider how consumers were trying to get done that job would have been the alternative at the time still involved much less economic investment of time.

Simply put, golf was overshooting because basketball and football were all easily available and you didn't thoroughly enjoy. The game of golf still belonged to the prestige to change in the late 1950s. From 1959 on saw several disruptors would finally speak to the average Joe and make him feel at home. What was once the game played by rich men five days a week weekend warrior's every other weekend excursion. In 1959, an American inventor invents a putter with more weight at the heel and a thinner, lighter sweet spot. The novel design makes it easier to hit the ball straight (Brief History of Golf). He launched his company to introduce the new style of putter and never looked back.

As of fourth largest market share in golf clubs, employed over 1200 people in 65 different countries. But to speak more specifically to what the Ping putter began to close the gap between the professional who is kind of interested in playing on the weekend if he knew like an idiot on the golf course. The Ping putter was designed in mind.

It was as easy for the amateur to now line up for a putter that has spent years practicing. Ping, still to this day, prides the engineering side of golf and has since expanded to offering all types of clubs. However, they are still mostly known for their excellence in putters. Prior to 1979, almost all clubs (excluding irons) were still made of wood. That year, Gary Adams, seeing an opportunity founded TaylorMade the first metal

1 wood. Like Sloshes and his putter, the industry 2012, Kurt Badness's of Forbes Magazine wrote, " Metal woo category in the golf business and represent roughly 35% of Tat Taylor Made owned 30% of the metal woods market at the start of 2011 and now commands 52% of the market. " Taylor Madame's metal wood again closed the gap between the professional golfer and the possibly-interested non-consumer. The use of a hollow metal head allowed Adams to make a larger club. This in turn created a larger sweet spot on the club and easier to hit. For the amateur golfer, this was a huge innovation.

Before long Taylor Made began offering their clubs with a graphite shaft which closed the professional gap even further. Now players were able to generate more club head speed with less effort and this meant more distance out of each shot. Non-consumers now began to feel like they could leisurely play the game well enough to actually enjoy it. What was before a guaranteed, frustrating ordeal eight actually be considered a possible hobby. With these few disruptive innovations, golf exploded in America over the next couple decades. As these entrants continually implemented sustaining technologies over the years, golf became an easier and easier game for the general public to be a part of.

This is even evident in the changes of golf courses during that same time period. The National Golf Foundation reported a 20% increase in the number of golf courses in America in the sass's. (Municipal Golf Courses) As of 2008, there were 17, 672 courses in America, 15, 000 more than the next closest

country. This growth almost certainly can be attributed to the overwhelming increase in popularity of the game.

As the professionals began to adopt new technology, golf courses were forced to adapt to golfers' new capabilities. Par 3s were now par 4s and par 4s were now par 5s. During that time, professional courses added thousands of yards to their courses so they would remain a challenge. So now that we have identified the disruptions that skyrocketed the game into the 1950s and 1960s, where is golf now? Recent data suggests that golf may have reached its plateau in America and may even be experiencing waning numbers in the recent years of the recession.

This has sent many golf equipment companies scrambling for the next big innovation. Taylor Made released a new driver in 2013 in the hopes that customarily was the next big disruption. For players that desired clubs customized to their height and swing, there really have not been a whole lot of economical options. A player could go to a sports specialty store and get fitted for clubs. However, this was expensive and the consumer had to wait for the clubs to be manufactured. With Taylor Made's new club, adjustments can be made on the spot, mid-round if desired.

Christensen reminds us, "How can you indemnify whether encounters exist? New-market disruptive innovations tend to take a link out of this chain-allowing people to do for themselves what previously required expertise. "(2004, page 8) This technology could make an argument it takes two links out of the chain, the specialization and expertise at the sports store and at the

manufacturer. With over 16 adjustments for splice, hook, loft and trajectory, this club just might be the club that gets non-consumers back in the game.

However, that is yet to be seen. Evidence can also be seen for now overshot consumers in the equipment industry. As the previous entrants (Ping, Taylor Made) become the incumbents through sustaining innovations, they have discarded the lower end of the market for which their products are now too good. For the general population who is not looking for the latest and greatest but still a simple easy club to hit, these can now be found in your Walter or Smart brand for a fraction of the cost. Although you won't get the maximum performance as a Taylor Made, it's going to be good enough for some.

And where does golf go from here? “ We should expect companies that follow the principles of disruption when they expand overseas to have high growth potential. Finding simple ways to reach consumers in developing markets provides tremendous room for growth. ” (Christensen, 2004, page 208) If we can consider for a moment, golf as a product and the R and USGS (the two governing bodies of golf) as incumbents of that product, we can apply Christensen logic to what appears to be happening with golf on a global stage and what the future looks like for golf.