The Indoor Golf ROI & Capacity Playbook

How to balance memberships, tee-sheet demand, bay utilization, and golfer experience before your calendar feels full.

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A DATA-BACKED PLAYBOOK FOR MAXIMIZING CAPACITY, REVENUE, AND GOLFER EXPERIENCE.

MEASURE BAY HOURS

PROTECT PRIME TIME

BALANCE MEMBERSHIPS

KEEP GOLFERS HAPPY

Foreword: revenue is not the same as capacity

Indoor golf operators often ask revenue questions as if the bay calendar were infinite.

How many members can I sell? What should I charge per month? How much hourly play do I need? How many league teams can I support? What happens if I add another bay?

Those are not only pricing questions. They are capacity questions.

An indoor golf facility sells time inside a constrained system. Every bay has a finite number of usable hours. Every membership consumes some of those hours. Every league block reserves some of them. Every public booking fills some of them. Every cleaning buffer, no-show, support issue, private event, or maintenance window removes some of them.

The easiest way to overestimate an indoor golf business is to model demand without modeling capacity.

But capacity is not one number. It is a mix of math, calendar behavior, and customer sentiment.

The math tells you how many hours exist. The tee sheet tells you how constrained those hours feel. The golfers tell you whether the experience still feels easy enough to keep paying for.

This guide is a practical playbook for using all three signals.

Executive summary: the capacity pulse

Before changing pricing, launching a new membership tier, or deciding whether to sell more memberships, every indoor golf operator should use three checks.

1. The math check

Start with total available hours and total included member hours sold.

Formula:

```
bays x hours per day x days available
```

A four-bay facility open 14 hours per day, 30 days per month has 1,680 gross monthly bay hours.

That is the easiest math.

Then make it realistic. The hours between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. do not count the same as the hours between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. Some hours are slow. Some are protected for leagues. Some are lost to setup, cleaning, maintenance, no-shows, or customer support.

Capacity starts with total hours, but the business runs on usable hours.

Next, calculate how many hours have been sold through memberships.

Formula:

```
included hours per membership x number of memberships sold
```

If a membership includes 10 hours per month and 100 members buy it, the facility has sold 1,000 member hours.

This is not perfect. Not every member uses every hour. Unlimited memberships require assumptions. Some members will use more than expected. Some will use less. Some will use mostly prime time. Some will use slow hours.

But comparing total available hours to total hours sold gives the operator a starting point.

2. The tee-sheet check

The tee sheet tells you whether the math feels true.

If tomorrow is full but the rest of the week is open, the facility is probably okay. Customers still have a good shot at getting a time they want.

If the tee sheet is full days in advance, the facility is probably at or near capacity. Members may still be happy for a while, but the operator is entering a tighter balancing act between maximizing revenue and keeping golfers happy with available tee times.

3. The golfer-feedback check

The last check is simple: talk to the golfers.

Ask:

- Does it feel crowded?
- Are you finding times that work?
- Are the best slots gone too quickly?
- Do you feel like the membership is still worth it?

The spreadsheet can miss frustration. The tee sheet can show pressure without explaining how customers feel. The customer conversation closes the loop.

Use all three checks together. That is the capacity pulse.

Chapter 1: Start with total available hours

The bay calendar is the income statement before it becomes money.

The first step is raw inventory.

Formula:

```
bays x hours open x days open
```

Examples:

Bays	Hours/day	Days/month	Gross monthly bay hours
2	14	30	840
4	14	30	1,680
6	14	30	2,520
4	16	30	1,920

Gross bay hours are useful because they create the top of the funnel.

But gross hours are not all equal.

Most facilities have demand concentrated after work, evenings, weekends, and winter months. A membership that looks safe against total monthly capacity can still break the business if every member wants Tuesday through Thursday after 5 p.m.

The operator has to weight the calendar by desirability.

For each bay, map:

- open hours
- prime-time hours
- member-only hours
- public booking hours
- league blocks
- instruction blocks
- event blocks
- cleaning/setup buffers
- maintenance windows

Then separate the month into three buckets:

1. **Prime-time inventory:** hours customers actively want.
2. **Shoulder inventory:** hours some customers will use if priced or packaged well.
3. **Soft inventory:** hours that rarely sell without a specific program.

Most pricing mistakes happen when operators treat soft inventory as if it were prime-time inventory.

If members receive unlimited access but only use prime time, the effective cost of serving them is much higher than the spreadsheet suggests.

Chapter 2: Compare available hours to hours sold

The simplest membership-capacity check is:

1. Calculate total available hours.
2. Calculate total included member hours sold.
3. Compare the two.

Example:

Metric	Value
Bays	4
Hours/day	14
Days/month	30
Gross available hours	1,680
Members sold	100
Included hours/member	10
Total member hours sold	1,000

At first glance, 1,000 sold hours against 1,680 available hours looks safe.

But the operator still has to ask:

- How many of those 1,680 hours are actually desirable?
- How many member hours will land in prime-time windows?
- How much public inventory should remain?
- How much time is reserved for leagues, lessons, events, or cleaning?
- How many members will not use all included hours?
- How many unlimited members will use more than expected?

This is why the hours-sold method is a starting point, not a final answer.

It is still valuable because it makes the invisible visible. A facility that has sold 1,000 included member hours cannot pretend those obligations do not exist just because some members underuse.

Chapter 3: Model memberships by usage, not just revenue

The first benchmark eBook showed that indoor golf membership pricing varies by tier, market, and model. This guide adds the capacity layer.

For each membership tier, define:

- monthly price
- included hours or booking privileges
- prime-time restrictions
- booking window
- guest rules
- cancellation/no-show rules
- expected usage
- expected prime-time share

Example:

Tier	Price	Expected bookings	Avg length	Monthly hours	Prime-time share
Practice	$99	2	1 hour	2	60%
Core	$189	4	1.5 hours	6	70%
Unlimited	$299	8	1.5 hours	12	80%

The unlimited tier is not just "more revenue." It may consume six times the bay hours of the entry tier. If it is priced only three times higher, the operator has to be sure the tradeoff is intentional.

Chapter 4: Use the tee sheet as a pressure gauge

The tee sheet is where the model meets customer reality.

One practical way to read capacity is booking lead time.

Ask:

- Is tomorrow full?
- Is the next weekday evening full?
- Is the next weekend full?
- How many days in advance do members need to book to get a good time?
- Are only the awkward hours left?

If tomorrow is full but the rest of the week is open, the facility may still have enough access. Customers can usually find a workable time.

If the tee sheet is full several days in advance, capacity pressure is real. That does not automatically mean the facility should stop selling. It does mean the operator should slow down and look at rules, pricing, public inventory, and member satisfaction.

Tee-sheet pressure is especially useful because it captures the thing members actually feel: availability.

A spreadsheet may say the facility has 500 unused hours. If those hours are mostly late night, weekday mornings, or other low-demand slots, members may still feel crowded.

Chapter 5: Talk to the golfers

Capacity is partly emotional.

Golfers do not experience a utilization percentage. They experience whether they can get a bay when they want one.

Operators should ask customers directly:

- Are you getting the times you want?
- Does the calendar feel crowded?
- Are you booking earlier than you used to?
- Are there days or times that feel impossible?
- Does your membership still feel worth it?

This does not need to be a formal survey. Operators who are in the facility cleaning, checking bays, running leagues, or talking with members can learn a lot from casual conversation.

The important thing is to ask before frustration becomes churn.

If the math looks fine, the tee sheet looks okay, and golfers say access feels good, the facility probably has room to keep selling or optimizing.

If the math looks tight, the tee sheet is filling days in advance, and golfers say it is hard to find times, the facility is at or near capacity for that customer experience.

Chapter 6: Understand the member ceiling

Every membership model has a ceiling.

The ceiling is not the number of people willing to pay. It is the number of members who can book often enough to feel the membership is valuable without crowding the calendar.

To estimate the ceiling:

1. Calculate usable monthly prime-time hours.
2. Decide what share of prime-time hours can be member usage.
3. Estimate average prime-time hours consumed per member.
4. Divide member prime-time capacity by average member prime-time usage.

Assuming prime time means weekday evenings from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. plus eight high-demand hours on each weekend day, four bays produce roughly 696 monthly prime-time hours in a 30-day month with 22 weekdays and eight weekend days: 4 bays x 5 hours x 22 weekdays = 440 weekday prime-time hours, plus 4 bays x 8 weekend hours x 8 weekend days = 256 weekend prime-time hours. If the facility wants members to consume no more than 60% of those hours, it has about 418 member prime-time hours available. If the average member consumes four prime-time hours per month, the rough ceiling is 104 active members before the prime-time calendar starts to feel crowded.

That is not a perfect answer. It is a useful warning light.

Chapter 7: Public hourly play is margin and marketing

Public hourly play is easier to model than membership usage because each booking has a visible price and time slot.

But public hourly play has tradeoffs:

- lower predictability
- more marketing dependence
- more first-time customer support
- more refunds and reschedules
- more seasonality
- more staff burden if the facility is not automated

Still, public play can be powerful. It lets customers try the facility before joining. It fills shoulder hours. It creates party and event demand. It gives the operator data about what the local market values.

For hybrid facilities, public booking should not be treated as merely leftover inventory. It is one of the main acquisition channels.

Chapter 8: Leagues change the math

Leagues are capacity blocks with retention upside.

They can:

- fill predictable recurring hours
- create community
- improve winter utilization
- drive food and beverage spend
- convert public players into members
- reduce marketing dependence

They also remove flexible inventory from the calendar.

Before launching a league, model:

- number of teams
- bays required
- weeks per season
- weekly time block
- price per player/team
- member discounts
- makeup-week policy
- prize or admin cost
- staff/support cost

A league that fills weak hours is very different from a league that consumes the best public booking hours. The first stabilizes the model. The second may still be worth it, but the opportunity cost is higher.

Chapter 9: Fixed costs create the revenue floor

Revenue targets should begin with fixed monthly cost.

Example: 4-bay mid-size hybrid facility with some staffing, no full kitchen/bar, and a moderate-cost lease.

Cost category	Monthly estimate
Rent and CAM	$8,000
Insurance	$750
Software	$800
Utilities	$1,200
Cleaning	$900
Marketing	$1,500
Payroll	$3,500
Owner draw	$2,500
Maintenance reserve	$1,000
Miscellaneous	$850
Total fixed cost	**$21,000**

If fixed costs are $21,000, the facility needs more than $21,000 in revenue. It needs enough gross margin to cover variable costs, taxes, reinvestment, and profit.

This insurance estimate is intentionally much higher than the one-bay, no-food/no-alcohol Iowa example in the startup playbook. Different bay counts, lease requirements, property limits, state, staffing model, and business-interruption coverage can change insurance materially; even without a full kitchen or bar, a four-bay commercial facility typically requires higher liability and property limits than a one-bay unmanned setup.

The practical question becomes:

Which combination of memberships, public bookings, leagues, lessons, and events can cover the floor without overloading the calendar?

Chapter 10: Build scenarios, not one forecast

A single forecast is fragile.

Build at least three scenarios:

1. **Base case:** realistic steady-state expectations.
2. **Slow-season case:** lower public demand and higher member reliance.
3. **Growth case:** higher utilization with calendar stress.

Each scenario should show:

- membership count
- average member usage

- public booking volume and hours
- league/event revenue
- league/event hours
- total used hours
- prime-time pressure
- monthly revenue
- fixed-cost coverage
- remaining capacity

Example scenario set for the same 4-bay hybrid facility:

Scenario	Members	Member hours used	Est. member prime-time hours	Public hours	League/event hours	League/event revenue	Monthly revenue	Capacity read
Slow-season	85	425	255	220	40	$2,000	$24,300	Fixed costs covered, but public demand is thin
Base case	100	500	300	340	70	$3,500	$32,400	Healthy only if tee sheet and golfer feedback confirm access still feels available
Growth case	120	660	462	430	100	$5,000	$43,100	Exceeds the 60% member prime-time target; do not keep selling without changing rules, pricing, or capacity

The numbers are illustrative. The point is the method: a revenue forecast is incomplete until it shows the bay hours required to produce that revenue.

The scenario table assumes roughly 60% of member usage lands in prime time in the slow and base cases, and roughly 70% in the growth case. That growth case is intentionally uncomfortable: 462

member prime-time hours is above the 418-hour member target from Chapter 6. It may still be physically possible if public play, leagues, and member usage are spread well, but it has crossed the comfort threshold. The operator should not keep selling without changing rules, pricing, off-peak incentives, or capacity.

The best model is not the most optimistic one. It is the one that remains believable when assumptions get worse.

Chapter 11: Convert the model into operating rules

The spreadsheet should produce rules, not just a profit estimate.

Useful operating rules include:

- how far ahead members can book
- how many active reservations a member can hold
- whether guests count against included hours
- whether prime-time access is capped
- whether unused hours roll over
- when public inventory opens
- how leagues reserve recurring blocks
- what late cancellation costs
- when a no-show triggers a penalty

Rules turn financial assumptions into customer behavior.

If the model assumes members average four bookings per month, but the rules allow every member to hold six prime-time reservations at once, the model and the product are not aligned.

If the model assumes public play fills 30% of prime time, but members can book all prime slots before public customers ever see them, the model and the calendar are not aligned.

Do not publish membership terms until the capacity model and booking rules agree.

Chapter 12: Price changes are capacity changes

Price changes alter who uses the facility and when.

Lowering a membership price may increase cash flow quickly, but it may also bring in high-usage members who consume prime-time inventory. Raising hourly rates may improve revenue per booking,

but it may also reduce first-time trial if the facility has not built enough trust.

When changing prices, model the behavioral effects:

- Will this increase prime-time demand or off-peak demand?
- Will this attract heavy users or light users?
- Will this reduce churn or increase churn?
- Will this push customers into memberships?
- Will this make public play harder to sell?
- Will this create a member/public fairness issue?

The best price is not the highest price the market will tolerate. It is the price that supports the operating model while preserving customer satisfaction and enough available capacity.

Chapter 13: Track actuals against assumptions

After launch, the model should become a scorecard.

Track monthly:

- member count
- member churn
- average bookings per member
- average hours per member
- member prime-time share
- public bookings
- average public booking value
- league/event revenue
- no-shows and late cancels
- refunds and credits
- utilization by day/hour
- fixed costs
- net cash after owner draw

Then compare actuals to the pre-launch model.

If members use more time than expected, membership pricing or rules may need adjustment. If public bookings are lower than expected, the facility may need stronger acquisition or clearer offers. If fixed costs are higher than expected, the break-even target moves.

The point of the model is not to be right forever. The point is to notice when reality is drifting before the business is under pressure.

Add two capacity-pulse checks to the monthly review:

- How many days in advance are members booking prime times?
- What are golfers saying about availability?

Those two questions keep the model tied to the customer experience.

Chapter 14: Warning signs in the model

Pause if the model requires:

- very high prime-time utilization from month one
- unlimited members who rarely use the facility
- public bookings to fill weak hours without a marketing plan
- no equipment downtime
- no summer slowdown
- no staff support during busy windows
- no months below break-even after opening
- no churn
- no failed payments
- no refunds
- no members using all included hours
- no complaints about tee-time availability
- no prime-time crowding

These assumptions make the spreadsheet look clean and the business fragile.

Chapter 15: What to change first

If the model is weak, do not immediately raise every price.

Work through the levers:

1. Reduce fixed cost.
2. Tighten membership rules.
3. Protect prime-time inventory.
4. Add league blocks in weak hours.
5. Improve public conversion.
6. Add event packages.
7. Improve no-show/cancellation discipline.
8. Adjust pricing after the calendar is understood.

The best pricing decision is often an operating-model decision in disguise.

Chapter 16: The one-page operator worksheet

Use this before changing pricing or adding a membership tier.

Capacity

- Bays:
- Monthly open hours:
- Gross bay hours:
- Soft inventory hours:
- Usable bay hours:
- Prime-time bay hours:
- Prime-time hours reserved for leagues/events:
- Prime-time hours reserved for public play:
- Prime-time hours available to members:

Memberships

- Current member count:

- Target member count:
- Average bookings per member:
- Average hours per member:
- Average prime-time hours per member:
- Total member hours:
- Total member prime-time hours:
- Total included hours sold:
- Estimated unused member hours:

Public and events

- Target public hours:
- Average public revenue per hour:
- League/event blocks:
- League/event hours:
- League/event revenue:

Fixed costs

- Rent/CAM:
- Payroll:
- Owner draw:
- Insurance:
- Software:
- Utilities:
- Cleaning:
- Marketing:
- Maintenance reserve:
- Other:
- Total fixed cost:

Decision

- Does the calendar support the revenue target?
- Does the revenue target cover fixed costs?
- Are members receiving enough access?
- Is public inventory still available?
- How far ahead are members booking prime times?
- What are golfers saying about availability?
- What breaks first if demand grows?

Closing: capacity is the truth serum

Indoor golf can look profitable in a simple revenue spreadsheet.

It becomes real when the numbers are tied to bay time.

If the model requires more prime-time hours than the facility can provide, pricing is not the problem. The model is.

If the model covers fixed costs while leaving customers with enough access to stay happy, the business has a foundation.

Start with capacity. Then price the model.

Source Notes

- SnagATime eBook 1 membership pricing benchmark and tier-stack dataset.
- SnagATime eBook 2 startup playbook and corpus-informed operator themes around membership pricing, league play, and 24/7/unstaffed operations.
- SnagATime indoor golf ROI calculator specs in `marketing/research/strategy/indoor_golf_roi_calculator_spec.md`.
- SBA, "Calculate your startup costs": https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/calculate-your-startup-costs
- SBA, "Write your business plan": https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan