

# Washington smart CEO

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### >>POWER STROKES

## Sharing a “Tiger moment”

### HITTING THE LINKS IS A GREAT WAY TO BOND WITH A COWORKER OR POTENTIAL CLIENT

While golf magazines tend to focus on technique and improving one's game, in her debut column Hilary Bruggen Fordwich focuses on the business aspects of golf through interviews with area leaders and by answering questions regarding when, where, with whom and how best to approach business golf.

**LEADERS ON COURSE:** This month I had the pleasure of speaking with Jim O'Neill, corporate vice president and president of Northrop Grumman's Information Technology division, which generates over \$5 billion in revenues annually and is based in McLean, VA.

When did you first play golf?

I learned how to play when I was about 14 years old. There was a course close to me at home in Ireland and I played as often as I could.

Who taught you how to play?

My dad. It was a great way for the two of us to spend time together. I have some wonderful memories of playing with him.

When did you first use it in your career?

I first played 'officially' when I was a police officer. Officers typically get offers to participate in benevolent association events.



Hilary Bruggen Fordwich

Do you play a lot of business golf today?

Northrop Grumman is a government contractor, so playing golf is something that we do little of with our customers due to all the oversight governing our interactions. When we do play with them, it is in AFCEA tournaments (Armed Forces Communications

ment, and other charitable tournaments with other company leaders.

Internally, like the many other activities where I interact professionally and socially with fellow employees, I play golf with them, too.

What have you found to be the benefits of golf in business?

While I don't think golf is a requirement for success in a corporation, it can be one more avenue for relationship building. One of the truly unique aspects of the game is that the next time you see someone after playing a round of golf with them, you can recall the exact shot members of the foursome hit, on a particular hole and laugh about it. There's a tremendous bond that is formed. The shared misery of playing golf poorly gives everyone an equal sympathy vote! On the other hand, the charm of golf is that everyone can have a "Tiger" moment holing out a long putt or making a great shot from the fairway. You also learn a lot about people playing golf with them.

How so?

Learning about people is easy on the golf course. You can discuss things with less formality than the office.

Each month Hilary will also answer a question from a reader on how best to approach business golf as well as provide interesting tidbits of golf news relevant to the lives of leaders. This month she addresses a question she has frequently been asked speaking around the country.

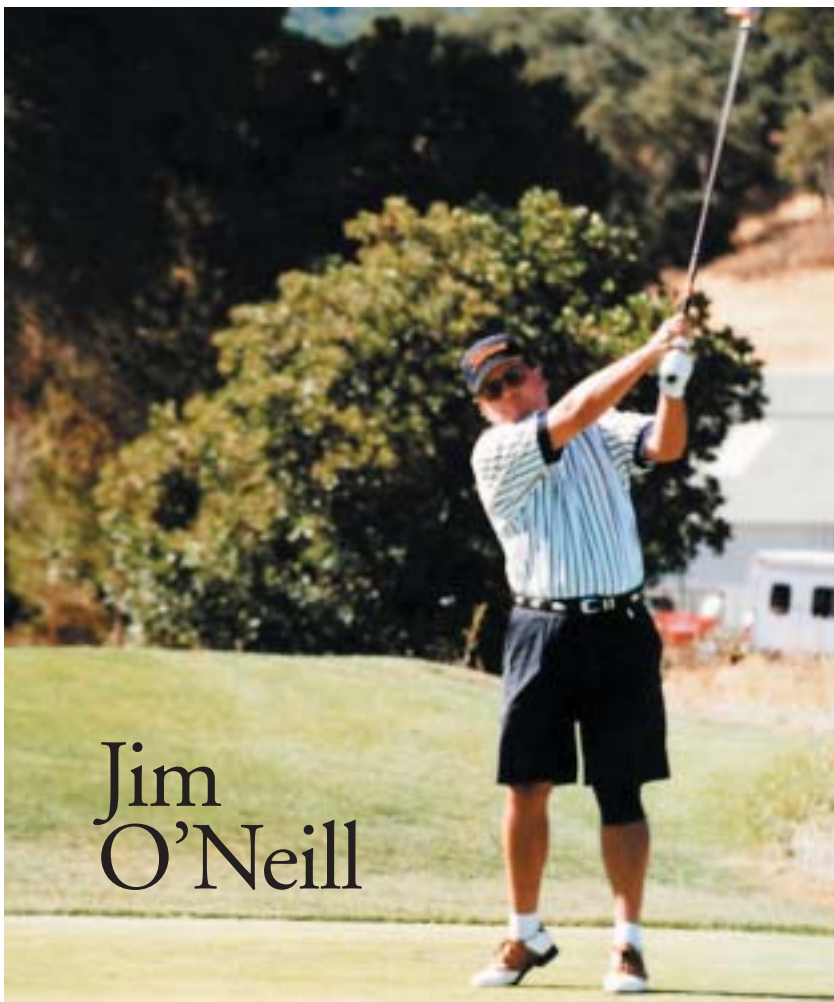
### STROKES OF GENIUS: What's the best hole to sponsor?

When deciding which hole to sponsor aim for the one where the players are held up, have to stand around, and have time on their hands and therefore time to visit your company's table. It is often a hole where there is a 'blind shot' or perhaps a par three that is tricky with woods and many bunkers where players ahead are held up looking for their balls. Another good hole to sponsor typically is one in which they are offering the opportunity to win a car for "a hole in one" as players ahead of you will be focused on trying to hole out. If you are not sure which of the holes have any of these characteristics, have someone call the club and inquire, "Which holes are players most likely to be held up on?"

Remember that while name recognition and branding are important, it is often even more critical – particularly for any professional service firm – to establish relationships via the one-to-one business bonding that takes place on course. I attend too many golf events where sponsor's employees are nowhere to be found. Worse yet, if they do attend, they typically golf together in a foursome, missing a golden opportunity to reach out to potential prospects.

### PARTING WORDS:

If you're looking for one of the best regional golf courses to enjoy the fall foliage, check out the 250-acre Shenandoah Valley Golf Course ([www.svgegolf.com](http://www.svgegolf.com)) in Front Royal, VA. If your gazing takes you further north all the way to New England, the Cranwell Resort, Spa and Golf Club ([www.cranwell.com](http://www.cranwell.com)) is breathtaking in the Berkshire Mountains of Lenox, MA. What a treat it was to golf this 72-par championship course with my son. It also sports the nationally renowned Golf Digest Golf School.



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