



Speaker profile Jo Maes

Although a late starter to the game, Jo Maes, got hooked and quickly reached a single digit handicap. He realised quite soon that there was a career to be had in golf but not by playing the game.

His first career step into golf was to manage his home club, Cleydael Golf Club near Antwerp in Belgium. He streamlined the membership and introduced a corporate membership to greatly improve the bottom line of the club. As from the start of the internet in the mid nineties, Jo Maes always knew that was where the future of golf marketing lay. At that point, he had an opportunity to manage Golf.be and consequently turned it from a simple golf portal into Belgium's leading online golf community. At the same time, he also started one of Belgium's most successful corporate golf events, the Invitational Golf Tour.



Jo Maes always had a fondness for everything Irish and personal matters saw him set up camp near Dublin at the end of 2004. He then turned to golf journalism and founded the European Golf & Travel Media Association of which he still is the Chairman. Over the years, his golf and travel articles have been published in many European magazines and websites. He has made presentations to various audiences about 'getting the best from the media'. His own e-zine GolfBUZZ, already on its 87th issue, is sent out to around 15,000 contacts every other week. The cutting edge content doesn't shy away from controversial statements and has already evoked plenty of reaction.

During the 2005 IGTM in Gran Canaria, Jo Maes met with the Sales Director of GolfSwitch Inc, Doug Reichel. Both gentlemen shared a vision and forged a plan that would see GolfSwitch move into the European Market. Doug was then based in Madrid and oversaw the agreements that were in place with Golfspain.com and TUI. Jo Maes joined the GolfSwitch organisation as consultant and assisted in the development of Golfhub.com and .eu which is quickly becoming Europe's largest online golf community. Jo Maes then joined the GolfSwitch organisation by heading up GolfSwitch International Ltd, a Europe based subsidiary that oversees the EMEA development.

He recently moved to the Algarve in Portugal from where he and his partner Denise Gallagher run the various elements of their business.