



## How the PGA TOUR Drives Fan Engagement



**+9%**  
Global digital unique visitors

**+26%**  
Global digital visits

**+22%**  
Cross platform engagements (digital, social and TV)



**"Adobe is the foundation for all that we do in the digital space."**

**Travis Trembath**  
VP of Fan Engagement, PGA TOUR

The PGA TOUR uses these solutions:

[Acrobat](#)  
[Advertising Cloud](#)  
[Analytics](#)  
[Audience Manager](#)  
[Creative Cloud](#)  
[Experience Manager](#)  
[Sign](#)  
[Target](#)

## Fans with a capital F

The digital revolution transformed golf from a revered 500-year-old pastime into a global entertainment experience. Today, golf attracts younger, more diverse fans who thirst for 24/7 content across multiple platforms. It's even changed the game itself. The "golf clap" is evolving because millennials hold an iPhone in one hand and prefer to whoop and holler. Golf is noisier, more colorful, more connected than ever. And the PGA TOUR — the world's premier golf organization — is driving this revolution by putting their fans first.

In 2017, Travis Trembath moved from a role in business development to become the TOUR's first ever VP of fan engagement. "Our commissioner, Jay Monahan, has really put the fan at the center of everything that we do at the TOUR," says Trembath. "Our entire staff approaches each day and every meeting from a fan-centric perspective."



Trembath, a respectable seven handicap, joined the TOUR from General Mills and was excited to help create an engaging and inspiring experience. “I have a tremendous amount of passion for understanding fans and consumers. I was a data-driven marketer before it was cool to be a data-driven marketer,” he admits. The PGA TOUR embarked upon a new journey with Adobe, and a suite of solutions designed to carefully measure fan interaction. With [Adobe Audience Manager](#), [Adobe Analytics](#), and [Adobe Target](#), they made some fascinating discoveries.

PGA TOUR fans are not just golf addicts who grew up with a seven-iron in one hand. Today the sport attracts dozens of “personas,” including casual spectators, fans who love certain players, and even those who discovered the sport while playing the PGA TOUR video game. But capturing the attention of these digital natives is harder than ever. Modern fans demand more content, more coverage, and more player access than ever before. They’re easily distracted by other sports, television and even Fortnite, says David Piccolo, vice president of brand marketing at the PGA TOUR. “Everyone is fighting the same battle. We have to work hard for attention. The whole strategy was positioned around future-proofing the PGA TOUR. We knew our brand needed to be refreshed.”

## The answer was analytics

The TOUR’s goal was to build a personal relationship with each fan, discover what makes them tick, then serve them the perfect content. Fans said they want access to behind-the-scenes action, news, and storytelling — not just on TV, but on the web and social media. “We needed to win in the digital space and create products and platforms that allow fans to consume us where it’s convenient,” says Trembath. “It’s imperative to our future that we innovate and create this great experience. Because if we don’t, we’ll lose our fans and it’ll hurt our business, no doubt about it.”

The PGA TOUR selected Adobe Audience Manager as their system of truth, using data from their CRM and the TOUR’s many digital channels to create a single view of their fan. Now, they can segment their audience into different groups, such as “avid fans,” who pay for tickets, check the leaderboard on the app, or match target demographic profiles. The benefits are two-fold. The PGA TOUR can better tell their advertisers who they’re reaching, and they can better serve the needs of

their fans. “Five years ago, we had no data analysts. Now we have a VP overseeing all of data and analytics, and a team of data scientists,” says Piccolo. “The type of person who comes to our website is really a different person from the one on our apps.”

“All our backend digital analytics are done using Adobe products,” explains Trembath. “It’s really the foundation for all that we do in the digital space. Ultimately, we know that each fan has their own individual journey, so we’ve customized our content around those different segments and how they engage with the sport.” A fan who loves to play golf might be enticed with an offer to play at a world-class PGA TOUR course. A casual viewer might get a push notification that their favorite player is about to sink a third birdie in a row. A die-hard fan who purchased a Friday ticket for a PGA TOUR competition might be offered Saturday and Sunday tickets. “The true goal for us is really to get down to that one-to-one relationship with each fan,” says Trembath.



At the PGA TOUR headquarters each week, the analytics team prepares a 15-page document that dives deep into the numbers. Around the table are content and storytelling teams ready to review what works and what doesn’t. Then they can change course based on the data — like a golfer testing the wind by tossing a handful of grass into the air. Next, Adobe Target allows the PGA TOUR to test the user experience of their sites and apps, using A/B testing to tweak and boost performance. The media and digital sales team can even discover their own analytics, without the need to ask an expert. And that’s not the only way Adobe has streamlined life at the PGA TOUR.

“We started with Adobe when we were looking for a great content management solution in 2012,” recalls Scott Gutterman, vice president of digital operations at the PGA TOUR. “We’re also very heavy users of Creative Cloud.

Naturally, the PGA TOUR design team uses the full Adobe Creative Cloud suite. Adobe Premiere powers video creation, live clip-editing, and production of post-TV clips. Some casual viewers might be surprised to learn that golf highlights are selected using machine learning — it’s artificial intelligence that knows when their favorite player is on a birdie streak and creates a highlight package. Using a single stack across the whole business creates less tech debt and reduces engineering costs.

## PGA TOUR uses these Adobe products:

### **Analytics**

Analyze online and offline behavior to get a full picture of the customer journey.

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### **Audience Manager**

Data management platform, audience segmentation, audience insights, real-time action.

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### **Analytics**

Test and optimize with machine learning across mobile apps and the web.

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## Top of the leaderboard

Across all aspects of the PGA TOUR, the organization has doubled down on the fan experience. That's "fan with a capital F," Gutterman likes to say. Personalization across the TOUR's digital platforms allows fans to identify their favorite players, pin their heroes to a leaderboard, and receive push notifications across all mobile apps. "Now we're producing 500 to 600 highlights for fans a week, which has almost tripled what we've done over the past couple of years," says Gutterman.

"Tournaments are now designed with the spectator in mind," adds Trembath. Following the TOUR is more than tuning in to a television, it's a multiplatform experience. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Adobe has helped the PGA TOUR unify their digital business operations.

"We took our digital business from being managed outside by joint ventures and brought it in-house, which took our team of 15 people up to well over 100," says Gutterman. That included replacing their media-buying agency with an internal advertising team running **Adobe Advertising Cloud**. "Today we use Advertising Cloud as our primary DSP," says Jing Yi Ju, senior manager of advertising activation and solutions at the PGA TOUR. "For me it's an easy process. Easy to understand and comprehend. That's part of the decision-making behind why we picked Advertising Cloud as our DSP. Another factor is we're using Adobe Audience Manager as our DMP, so everything is under the Adobe umbrella."



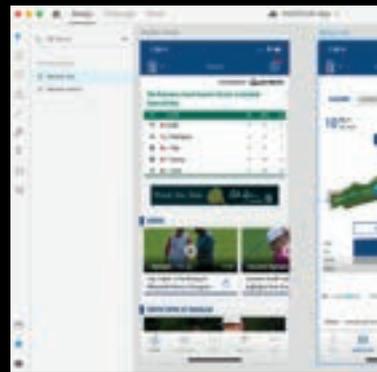
# Every shot — live

In March of 2020, the TOUR will launch Every Shot Live. For the first time in golf history, every shot by every player will be livestreamed at THE PLAYERS Championship. This monumental task of showcasing more than 32,000 shots over 72 holes will require nearly 120 cameras positioned throughout the course, each group with its own dedicated stream. "Fans will be able to literally watch every single golf shot that's hit across the course of a tournament," says Trembath. The TOUR hopes this will draw more fans to the sport and give existing fans more reasons to stay engaged.

For fans who want to see tournaments live, there's now a state-of-the-art app that delivers real-time information and content on the ground. "We've created an awesome on-site fan experience that allows fans to navigate the golf course and have the best experience," says Trembath. "If you want to follow your favorite player around all day, you can do that. If you want to hang out in a venue with your friends and eat and drink all day, you can do that, too." Trembath says the most satisfying part of his job is seeing people walking around using the app. "The light bulb goes off and they immediately get it," he says.

1

The PGA TOUR uses Adobe Creative Cloud to design apps and web experiences to deliver behind-the-scenes action, news, and storytelling.



2

The team uses their state-of-the-art lab to test their content on all devices, while data and personalization ensures fans never miss a moment.



3

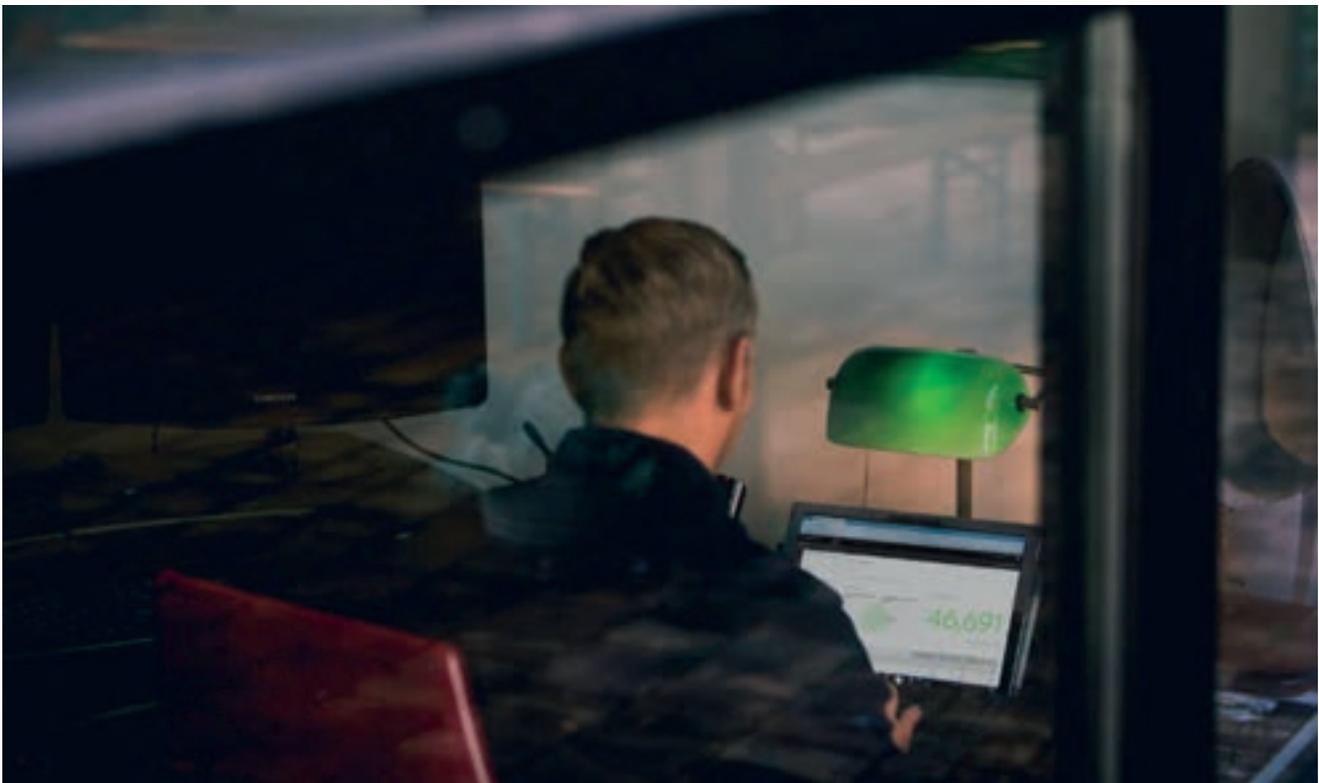
Fans can watch their favorite players tee-off live on their devices and keep track of the latest tournament scores and results. That's fan engagement.



## Making magic moments

Trembath says he's witnessed a digital revolution at the PGA TOUR. "It's obviously a changing world and this is all new territory for me, but a new territory for everybody, too. It's an exciting time for sure," he says. "In the past seven or eight years, there's been a tremendous influx of young talent on the PGA TOUR. And these players — Rickie Fowler, Jordan Spieth, and Rory McIlroy — not only are they great, transcendent talents on the golf course, they've got great personalities. We're launching a feed-based, personalized experience in our app that'll allow fans to receive content based on who their favorite players are."

"Over the years we've grown our use of Adobe products," says Gutterman. And we'll only continue to grow our use of Adobe. And, you know, it's really helped us to evolve how we approach our fans." Gutterman says this is all part of the continued evolution of the PGA TOUR platforms.



And what might the next 10 years have in store for golf fans? "You'll have your own personalized consumption streams, which will stretch not only from video, but to data, storytelling, video highlights, all kinds of new types of content," says Gutterman. "I think what you'll see in 2025 is a highly personalized and highly distributed presentation of the PGA TOUR." Whatever happens, the fan will be front and center. One story from 2019 sums this up.

The most engaged video ever on the PGA TOUR's Facebook page does not include Tiger Woods, or Rory McIlroy, or even Jordan Spieth. It's about a 20-year-old girl named Amy Bockerstette. "It was a moment in last year's Waste Management Phoenix Open," recalls Trembath. "Gary Woodland played the famed 16th hole at TPC Scottsdale with Amy, who has special needs." The crowd got behind Bockerstette and then rose to their feet when she made a par. "It was the interaction between Gary and Amy," said Trembath. "It was just one of those moments that makes you appreciate everything that we do." And when she sunk an eight-foot putt to make par, the audience went wild, and the video became a viral hit. Now that's fan engagement.

## More customer success



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