

COMPANY PROFILE

EASY PICKER GOLF PRODUCTS, INC.

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George Hedlund is not a man who moves through life in half-measures, whether it's starting a business or playing a skins game with his buddies on the weekend. He's a man who in the classic sense rep-



George Hedlund, president of Easy Picker Golf Products

resents the roll-up-the-sleeves mentality of many individuals involved in the golf range industry. A gregarious guy and father of five, his company, Easy-Picker Golf is where it is today primarily due to his drive, product line innovations and commitment to salesmanship. He's also been very accurate in his selection of key personnel to galvanize the day-to-day activities. Two of his long-term colleagues in the business who have made a tremendous impact along the way in the sales area are Giles Meyer, VP with a 17-year track record at Easy-Picker and Chris Keyte, National Sales Manager who has been with the company for 10 years. One of the very first hires, Angel Fernandez, who runs the spotless warehouse and overall operations is another important player in the expansion of the company. In total, 50 people are part of the Easy-Picker Golf Products "family" based out of their Florida headquarters in Lehigh Acres, just outside of Ft. Myer. Originally based in California, the company built their new 45,000 square foot office and warehouse in 1997.

A Little Background

The origins of this corporate story begin, oddly enough, at the bottom of a pond on a California Golf Course that Hedlund regularly played in the 1970's. We'll get to that in a moment. Having grown up in a somewhat prototypical California lifestyle, Hedlund was a footballer good enough to get a draft call from the L.A. Rams in 1962. Although he never got a chance to make that career happen due to a broken back injury, he did coach on and off in the high school and junior college circuit for 14 years while earning his living as a mechanic and plumbing contractor for commercial and residential projects. But back to the pond story. His playing partner, an assistant pro named Del Lee, had been experimenting with a home-made contraption consisting of special composite discs, a metal pipe and rope. He was having some modest success with dredging and reclaiming pond balls. In a first eureka moment, there was joint discussion about how to

turn this into a ball picker with commercial applications. Hedlund drew up a lightweight frame concept that differed from the heavy straight-line pickers that were out there. The pickers of the day needed to be pulled by heavy tractors and did not have the gang feature that allowed for a variety of terrain. In these early days, his partner, while good at the technical side was not able to close deals so Hedlund became the main sales force. Through out the 1970's, sales were focused only on Southern California.

Easy-Picker Is Officially Launched

In 1983, Easy-Picker Golf Products was officially launched and the decision was made to attend the Golf Course Superintendents Show held in Las Vegas. Hedlund recounted how surprised he was when he showed up having been told by his then-partner that they had space in the show, incorrectly as it turned out. Borrowing a page from Guerilla marketing 101, his partner decided they



Dave Barnes, Sales Manager; Phil Niemi, Inventory/Purchasing; Gregg Buell, Account Executive; Giles Meyer, Alex Aguirre, Shipping & Receiving; George Valentine, Controller; Angel Fernandez, Production Manager; Charlene Garcia, Accounting; Claudia Perez, Sales Assistant; Mike Wilcox, Account Executive; Patty Clemons, Accounting; Zory Colon, Accounting; Chris Keyte, National Sales Manager; kneeling down, front row: Richard Diaz, Shipping & Receiving; Gumar Ramos, Warehouse Foreman.

should simply walk the aisles and try to sell in that manner. Hedlund describes what happened next, "My partner said the customers would be at the show but I said that's not the way to approach this market. While he stayed on the floor, I went back to the hotel, grabbed a phone book and set up appointments with several key courses in the area. I went out and sold 5 pickers to three courses. I was able to listen to the guys raving about our products. We had a 7-gang 21-foot unit that could be pulled by a golf cart. They loved it." Hedlund decided at that time to raise the funding for the company and eased out of the day-to-day operations. Things started to nose-dive as sales and follow-through lapsed. "We had run ads in Golf Management, Golf Shop Operations and the PGA Magazine with reply cards. I found cards stacking up that had been returned for action. The problem was I wanted an in-house sales team and they wanted to use distributors," says Hedlund. Hedlund stepped back in and took over the entire operation with the help of Jim

Nichols and Paul Salata. At the 1985 PGA Merchandise Show, they were able to pack their booth by running a TV video loop, common today but a curiosity at



A look inside the 45,000 sq. ft. plant

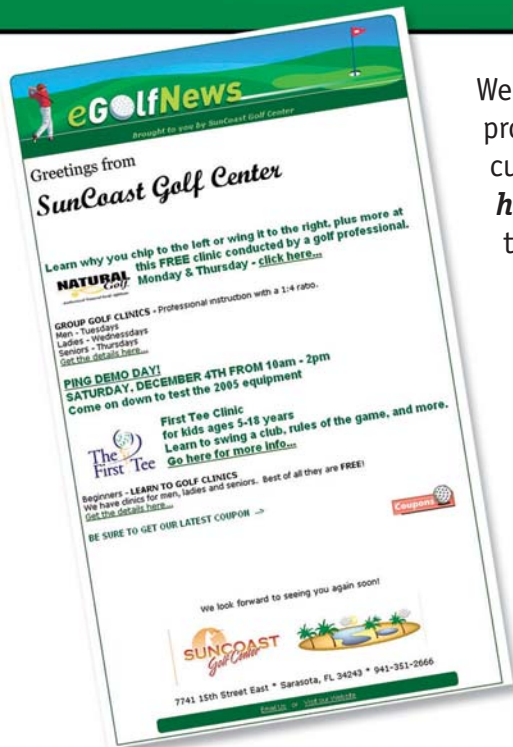
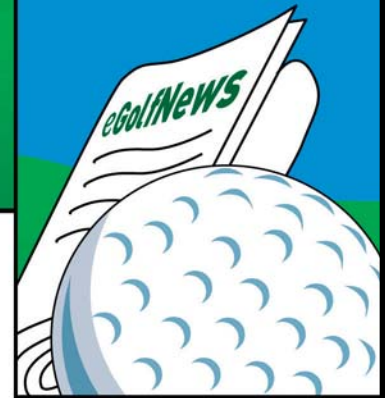
the time. Neighboring exhibitors complained but as Hedlund explains, "I was there to sell...not shake hands." Hedlund bought back the share of the company he did not own and brought in Giles Meyer to spur the sales effort. Meyer had been involved previously in an import-export company.

New Phase in the Company

During the late 1980's the ramp-up of business at Easy Picker was swift. Besides the lightweight picker products, the company also started producing a line of ball washers. "Before we undertook the introduction of any product we decided it would have to combine the best materials and craftsmanship with the longest life possible," according to Hedlund. The ball washer was an adaptation on the 1940's commercial-grade egg washer with an open-spiral design. Other vendors had similar type of technology, but that's not unusual in the industry. With the input from a new production guy, Bob Junkins

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who ran a metal-fabricating business called Tri-Star Steel, Easy Picker came out with a ball dispenser line in 1989 as well. That was soon followed by the introduction of synthetic turf mats. In those days, the company relied a lot on the input of the Barber Brothers who ran Griffith Park. Griffith Park was the testing ground for many of the new ideas. In an unfortunate twist of fate, both Bob and Steve have passed away from similar brain tumors.

Company Moves from California to Florida

In 1997, Hedlund decided to make a fresh start in Florida and was lured to Lee County, just outside of Fort Myers, Florida. In an amazingly fast construction timeframe (four months), Easy Picker had a new gleaming home. Nearly half the people from California decided to make the move to Florida, testimony to the loyalty and esprit de corps of the place. The new facility is a picture of cleanliness and organization. It comes as no surprise then that Easy Picker is one of the largest range equipment companies in the world today. □

EASY PICKER SENDS GOLF SUPPLIES TO U.S. TROOPS IN IRAQ

On June 6, 2004, Easy Picker Golf Products' national sales manager Chris Keyte received correspondence from 1st Lieut. James Gifford, who is assigned to Company HHB 1-6 FA, Operation Iraqi Freedom II (FOB Gabe).

In his e-mail, Lt. Gifford requested some support from Easy Picker for the troops, by providing them with equipment so they could utilize a flat area behind their barracks — already being used as a shooting range — as a golf driving range, to provide them with a way to blow off some steam when they're out of the field.

Keyte, an ex-Sergeant in the Marine Corps (he served stateside and overseas with Delta 1/9), thought this would be a great way to show Easy Picker's support for our troops. Within a few hours of Keyte's request, he and V.P. Giles Meyer had put together a complete package of assorted driving range equipment: mats, ball trays, shag bags, dividers, and range balls with the American flag logo imprinted on them.

The equipment arrived between July 8-11. Shortly after, Lt. Gifford sent another e-mail, stating how overwhelmed the troops and staff by EZP's generosity and support.

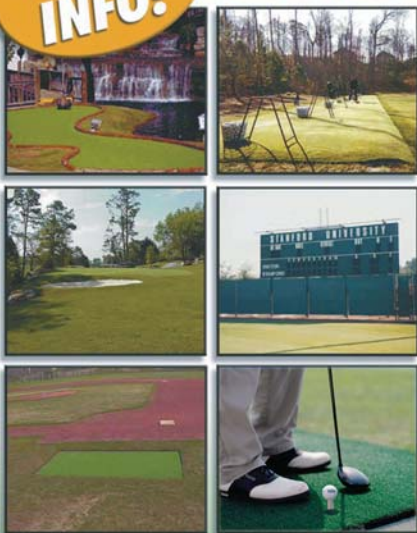
Newly promoted Capt. Gifford (GOLF RANGE Magazine wonders if his procurement abilities were a factor) and Keyte still stay in touch, and are both looking forward to the day they can play golf together stateside, and share stories and a cold one.

Easy Picker also has helped out with a request from the upper echelons of the PGA Tour office in November to provide some equipment in another troop support effort on the Tour's behalf. A pallet with a ball picker and other equipment left for Iraq before the holidays.



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