

Hole world in your hands

CaddyAid, DMC's new handheld GPS system, with its impressive array of must-have features, is taking the golf industry by storm, writes Tania Sansom

DMC IS EMERGING as a market leader in GPS technology. It is also becoming a major success within the golf industry, but perhaps it is a company that you have not even heard of.

A Welsh organisation, through its technical expertise, has brought to the international golf market what some decision makers are considering to be the best GPS in the world. CaddyAid has already won at the British invention show for its innovation in this field.

CaddyAid is the only system in the world that shows the golfer a photograph of the hole being played. It shows the player's standing position on the hole via a cursor, and then automatically displays the distances to a maximum of 14 different key points, such as the green, bunkers, trees and ditches.

Also, CaddyAid is the only product that informs the golfer that the distance, literally, to any blade of grass that they manually select. This was used to huge effect at last year's Open Championship, when a host of caddies and players took advantage of the technology.

"CaddyAid provided precision distances to the front and the back of key areas at Hoylake, in addition to any blade of grass. Already I can rely on its accuracy, which is essential for any caddy," said Bradley Dredge's caddy, Nick Fidgeon.

DMC managing director David Morris said: "We know we have an amazing product in CaddyAid. It's been so well received by retailers, customers, golf clubs and pros."

Harrods was the first outlet for CaddyAid, and the sales team has considerably exceeded its targets three months ahead of schedule. "CaddyAid is the most revolutionary new golf gadget we have ever seen – it is a must have for the golfer who has everything!" said a Harrods spokesperson.

As well as GPS, the product encompasses advertising, which, for golf clubs, has meant, should they choose to have a mix of external adverts as well as internal, they can pay for the devices via the clever use of advertising, seen when a player changes holes. These adverts can be either stills or in movie format, again a golf industry first.

Stephen Hanifan from Mercedes was

quick to grasp the opportunity, saying: "CaddyAid is an amazing product, and one, through its innovative and dynamic advertising capabilities, will clearly attract customers to the Mercedes brand."

On top of all this, CaddyAid can promote every single item of stock in the pro shop, right down to a bar of chocolate, complete with pictures of products. The 'Pro Shop Offers' feature allows the shop to promote the product image, heading and description complete with pricing to the golfer.

"The objective is simple," said David Morris. "When the golfer comes off the course, they have to return the rented CaddyAid to the shop. They may well have seen an item of interest while playing and, as such, a sale will take place – all as a result of seeing its promotion within CaddyAid."

Colin Sinclair, director of golf at Carnoustie, said: "CaddyAid is of huge benefit to the golfer and the PGA pro because of its built in features."

But DMC does not stop there, one final piece of technology it offers to golf clubs is a product called Fairway Flyover. Instead of those tired, still and outdated photos of the golf course, the Fairway Flyover is a helicopter flyover movie of every single hole on your course. So when you rent out your CaddyAid device, the golfer sees the helicopter flyover movie of the hole they are about to play, they see a photo of the hole they are playing, they can tell the distance to any point on the course, and they can see all the stock in the pro shop.

CaddyAid has grasped the attention of golf's leading figures, from pros and caddies to player management companies. Chubby Chandler, who runs the ISM company, managing players such as Els, Westwood, Clarke and Howell, said: "A truly fantastic device which will change the way we look at distances on the golf course."

Ryder Cup hero Darren Clarke is another advocate. His caddy Billy Foster said: "Like many players, Darren wants to know the distance to every blade of grass on the course; CaddyAid lets me tell him how far it is from where we are to any point using the large colour screen. It really is that accurate. I have



Innovative: DMC's new handheld PDA

seen the other products on the marketplace but they don't even come close to the functionality that CaddyAid offers"

DMC's Morris continued: "We have aerial photographs of virtually every single golf course in the UK. Through these special photographs we can produce an array of products for the golf clubs, such as framed photographs for clubhouse usage, printed distance guides, scorecards, provide the CaddyAid or indeed the Fairway Flyover. Other companies come to us for the imagery, and then add on a high mark-up to the client, we do not need to do that, so the golfer gets the latest imagery, at a cheaper price.

"We help the club as much as possible. The club can show photographs of their course, include text, have all their contacts listed (name, address, telephone number, email and internet address), they can change their own adverts, and also promote all their pro stock on the web page."

So there it is, a company based in Wales has possibly the best device to come on the market since metal-headed woods. With so much focus on Welsh golf leading up to Ryder Cup 2010, it will be interesting to see how much of the international market DMC can control before Europe's 12 men, good and true, tee it up on Friday morning at Celtic Manor. **GCM** Visit www.caddyaid.com, email info@caddyaid.com or tel 01745 334937