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## Questions



**With Kelsey McLean, founder and co-owner of Fore Kids Golf**

By Lisa Goulian Photos by Jim Graham

It's tough to find an unfilled niche in the golf market, but that's exactly what entrepreneur Kelsey McLean did when she came up with the concept for a high-end baby and children's apparel company just after giving birth to her son in February 2012. With the help of husband Robert McLean (now the company's CFO), she developed a classically styled clothing line designed to be embroidered with club logos that includes polos, baby bodysuits, dresses, hats, blankets, bathrobes and trousers. A year and a half after introducing Fore Kids Golf at the 2013 PGA Merchandise Show, McLean – whose company will be a presenting sponsor at the 2015 PGA Magazine Merchandiser of the Year Conference – explains some of the keys to her early success.



### 1 What gave you the idea to start this high-end baby clothes company?

**McLean:** Country Clubs and golf clubs are more and more focused on families, so it seemed natural when I was pregnant to go to our golf shop to buy some items for my baby. I learned country clubs didn't offer babies and children high-end, classic apparel embroidered with club logos. I found a passion for creating our designs, while supporting my husband's love of golf. And our son is now very well dressed.

### 2 How would you describe the progress Fore Kids Golf has made in the last two years?

**McLean:** I am overwhelmed by the warm response of the golf shops and golfing community. It's been very exciting to see so many people who are as passionate about our clothing as I am. We are particularly excited because virtually all our customers call regularly with reorders. Having often been told, "We do not sell infant/toddler clothing and do not think it will work", these reorders are pretty special.

### 3 What separates Fore Kids Golf from other kids apparel brands in the marketplace?

**McLean:** We provide unsurpassed quality of garments made of 100 percent pima cotton and other exceptional textiles. We use the latest equipment and technology to ensure top quality embroidery, as we understand the importance and value of the club logos, which separate golf shops from other golf merchandisers. Most golf apparel companies sell their products on public websites, in retail stores, etc. We are green grass only, and sell to many of the finest shops, hotels, resorts, spas and merchandisers.

**4** What do you say to a PGA Professional or buyer when they tell you, “I just can’t sell children’s apparel”?

**McLean:** I always ask if the membership is mostly parents and grandparents. The answer is always “yes.” After mentioning a few key facts, like how grandparents have on average seven grandchildren and therefore represent a massive number of potential customers, I mention how we support the PGA Professional after the sale. I let them know that we provide free mannequins and hangers, plus marketing tools all designed to create a beautiful display. We help with ideas to promote the products and anything and everything we can to improve sell-through. We view the relationship with our customers as a partnership and want to help in any way we can.

Our buyers have commented that their

displays have brought more foot traffic into the shop, and not only have made our product easier to sell but also other products they carry. Parents and grandparents love the idea of their little ones sporting the club logo and our products allow them to share their passion with the next generation.

**5** What is the most exciting thing Fore Kids Golf has on the horizon?

**McLean:** We are introducing some exciting new products to our line that will be available for the holiday season, and we strive to continually improve the quality and design of both our apparel and embroidery. We have a new embroidery facility and warehouse that has dramatically reduced our lead times. Fore Kids Golf is expanding across the United States and internationally, and our goal is to provide the best product and service in the marketplace. ■

