

COREY CONNERS

THE ATHLETE'S PERSPECTIVE:
BRAND ANALYSIS

BY: EVAN DOERFLER





COREY CONNERS



- Corey Connors is a Canadian professional golfer who currently plays on the PGA Tour
- Attended Kent State University for Actuarial Mathematics in 2014
- Aged 30, Connors was born in Listowel, Ontario, Canada, and turned pro in 2015.
- Won his first PGA Tour event at the 2019 Valero Texas Open, currently ranked 33rd in PGA Tour (World Ranking)
- 1 of 26 Canadians to win a tournament in either the PGA or LPGA Tour
- Connors is progressing Canada in the sport of Golf at the professional level

WHAT IS THE ATHLETE'S PERSPECTIVE?

- The athlete's perspective considers the viewpoints of the athletes themselves compared to the media's presentation of the athlete, the fan's outlook, and the general consensus of sport.
- Through specific topics, we can learn about the difference in experience between the athlete and the rest of the world who are secondary stakeholders in sports.
- Topics include the athlete's perception of the media, how and why athletes use social media, media's impact on performance, and media representation.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- It's important to understand the perspective of the athlete to further better the future generations of both athletes and sport.
- Improving in areas that struggle like media and athlete's relationships, positivity, authenticity, criticism, and how we approach athletes, we can help to build a better system for future generations to come.
- Athletes are what drive sports. It's crucial that in our decision making we consider the athlete's perspective as it pertains to the success of sports on a daily basis.



What is the Self-Presentation Theory?

Self-Presentation Theory:

- ***"Subsumed within impression management, self-presentation refers to acts aimed at presenting oneself (and not others) in a certain manner" (Nichols, 2020, pp. 397-400)***
- ***The presentation of self that intentionally influences or changes how other people see you***
- ***In the case of athlete's, it's how they present themselves to the general audience, the image of oneself (in the way they see fit...). This relates to media by the process where athlete's and people attempt to influence the perceptions of their image***

HOW AND WHY COREY CONNERS?

METHOD DISCUSSION

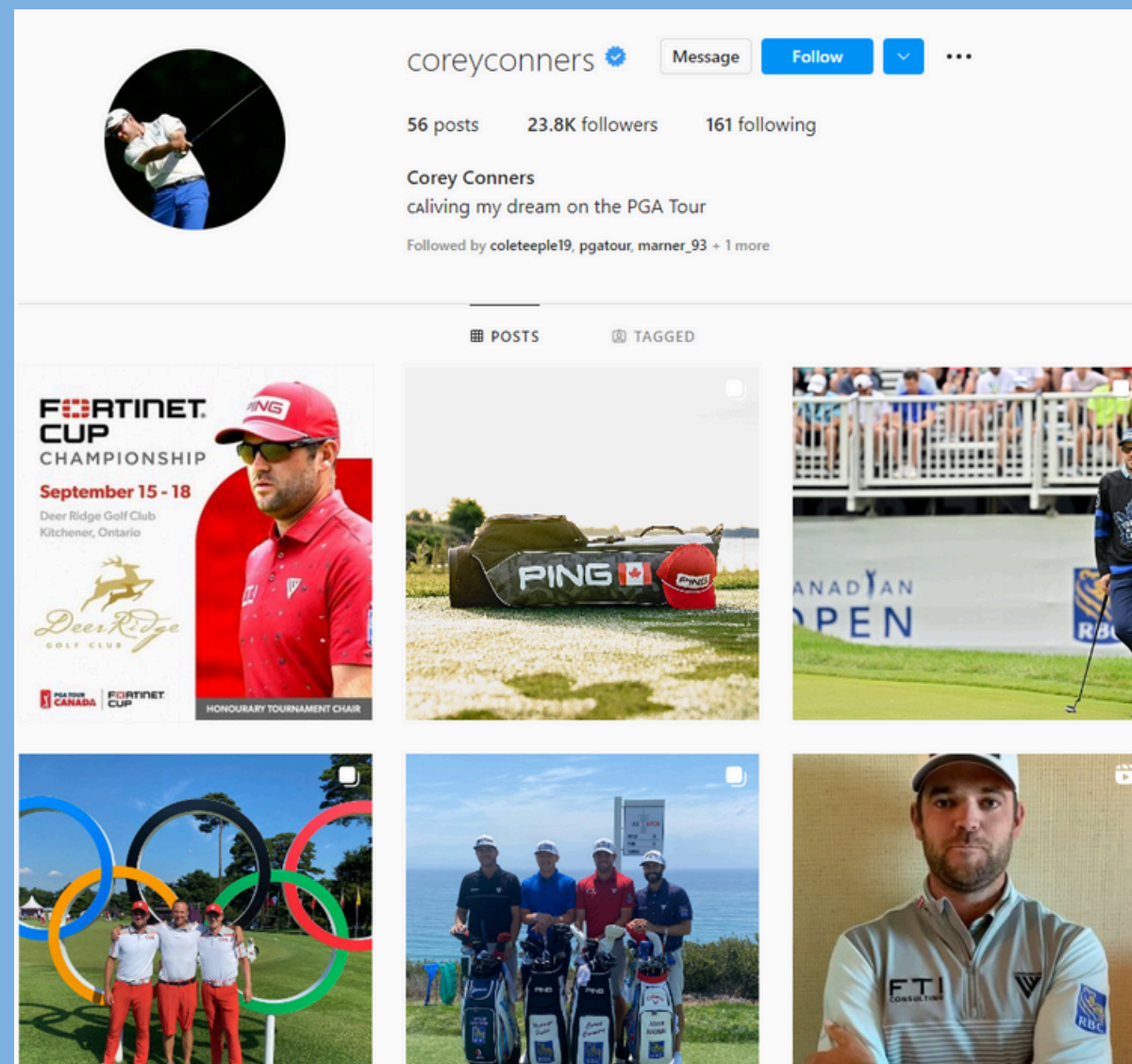
- Given the PGA Tour is heavily biased towards American and European players, Corey Connors alongside the other Canadian players receives minimized television coverage throughout tournaments that are held outside of Canada.
- Studying the perspective of a player of this caliber and the lack of attention he receives on live broadcasts, I was intrigued to see how he presented himself on social media and deconstruct if this was a reason for his minimized amount of coverage.
- I wanted to see if Connors was putting in the effort to promote himself through his own perspective, and how he was contributing to further professional golf in Canada.



PLATFORMS I CHOSE TO MONITOR CONNERS ACTIVITY ON



INSTAGRAM



TWITTER



METHOD DISCUSSION

PLATFORMS I CHOSE TO MONITOR

CONNERS ACTIVITY ON (DETAILS)

INSTAGRAM

- **Followers:** 23.8k followers, following 161 accounts
- **Posts:** 56 total Instagram posts, 9 posts since the beginning of 2021
- **Kind of content:** Mix of posts, reels (videos), and carousel's

TWITTER

- **Followers:** 22.5k followers, following 300 accounts
- **Posts:** 295 total tweets posted, 22 tweets since the beginning of 2021
- **Kind of content:** Mix of tweets, quote tweets, no retweets within the last year

HOW I DEFINE SUCCESSFUL USE OF MEDIA WITHIN ATHLETE'S

1. **Growth in themselves and the sport:** The athlete utilizes the new media to **consistently grow themselves and the sport** through brand reputation, relationship building, and engagement.

2. **Built their personal brand to it's maximum potential:** The athlete created a platform to share their lives, develop a connection, earn sponsorships, and self-promotion strategies **over the course of their career** (stability) to gain as much as they could.

3. **Built a foundation for long-term success:** You offered an **authentic** presentation in correspondence to the competitors. From your success, you developed endorsements, higher salaries, and generate success that is on pace to benefit you even when your career ends.

4. **Brand loyalty/relationships:** The athlete obtained **brand loyalty** and built stronger **long-lasting relationships** with stakeholders for themselves as athletes.

5. **Brand image and reputation:** The athlete maintained **reputable recognition** over time that created a **likable brand image** and sustainable brand equity that resulted in beneficiary results down the line.



FACTORS THAT GO INTO SUCCESSFUL USE OF MEDIA WITHIN ATHLETE'S

- **Being consistent** : By posting regularly, this raises the likelihood that your account will get noticed. From here, this will help to grow your social media accounts and your personal brand image. This will show a level of commitment to your followers, which can translate to their opinion of you as an athlete.
- **Engagement and interaction:** By engaging with your fans, this will only encourage more people to follow you. Liking posts, commenting, and engaging with other accounts will only boost the odds of more people engaging with you. This could help in obtaining sponsorships and support systems because people care about what you are doing.
- **Building a brand:** By marketing yourself to the public, this allows you to build your own personal brand in the way you see fit. You can build a fan base and effectively utilize social media to show your personality which will contribute to how people perceive you.



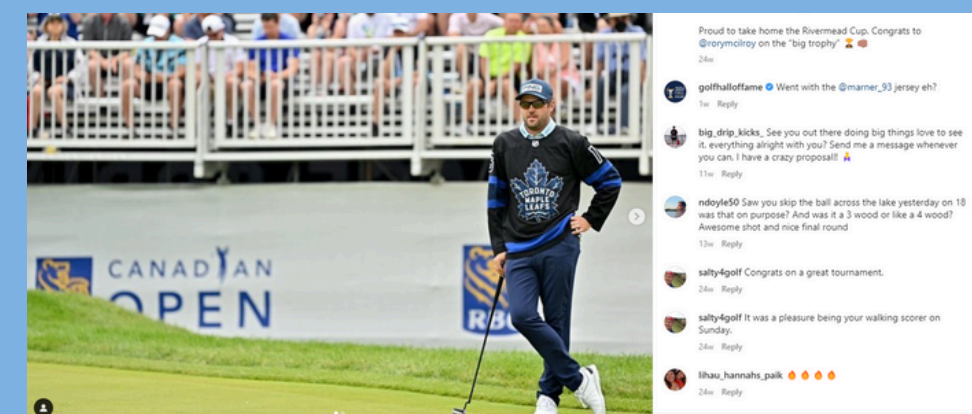
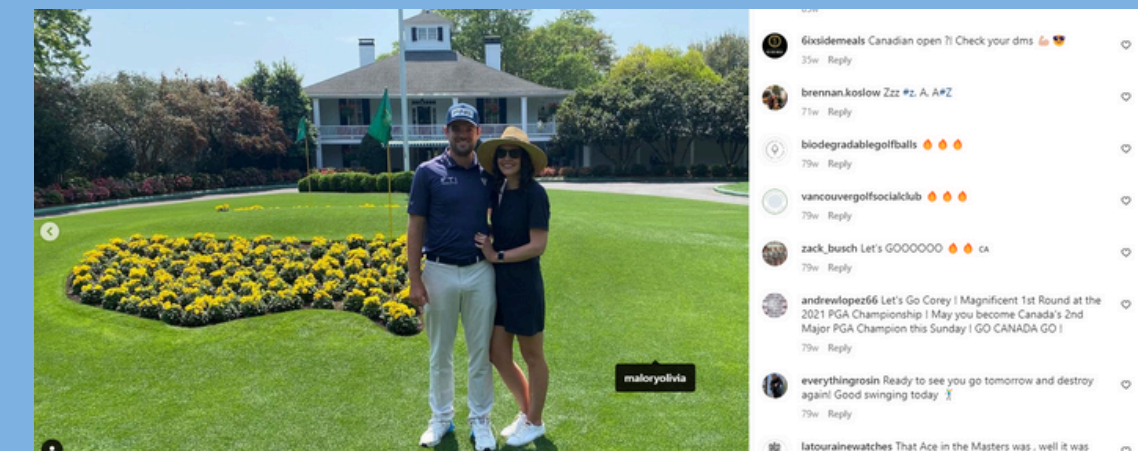
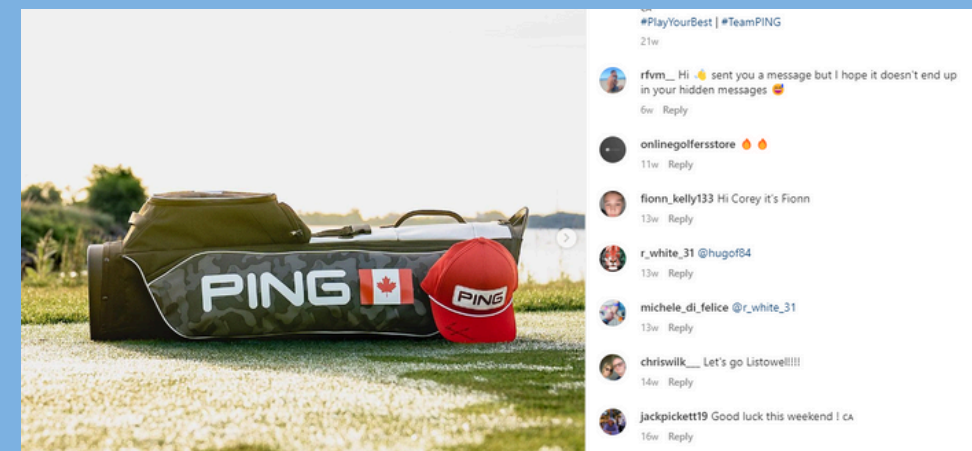
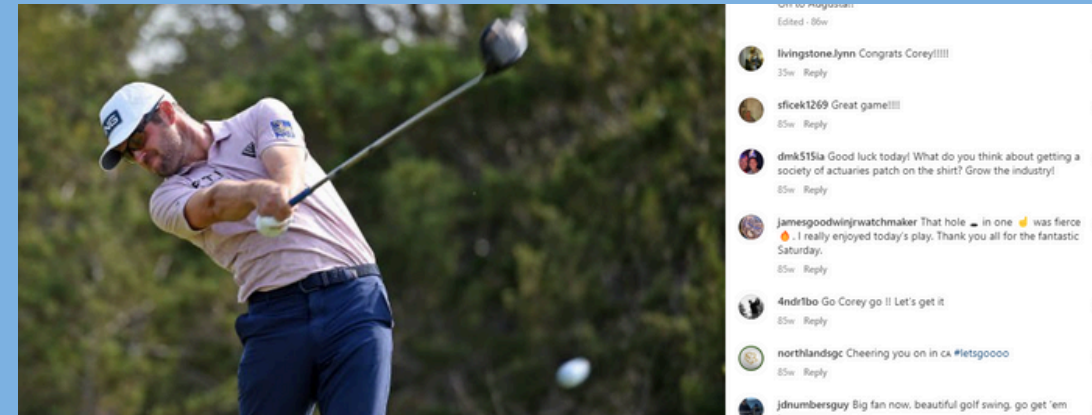
HOW COREY CONNERS PRESENTS HIMSELF ONLINE

USING THE SELF-PRESENTATION THEORY 1/2

SELF-PRESENTATION THEORY:

"THE PRESENTATION OF SELF THAT INTENTIONALLY INFLUENCES OR CHANGES HOW OTHER PEOPLE SEE YOU"

A FEW EXAMPLES VIA SOCIAL MEDIA (INSTAGRAM)



FINAL DISCUSSION

HOW COREY CONNERS PRESENTS HIMSELF ONLINE

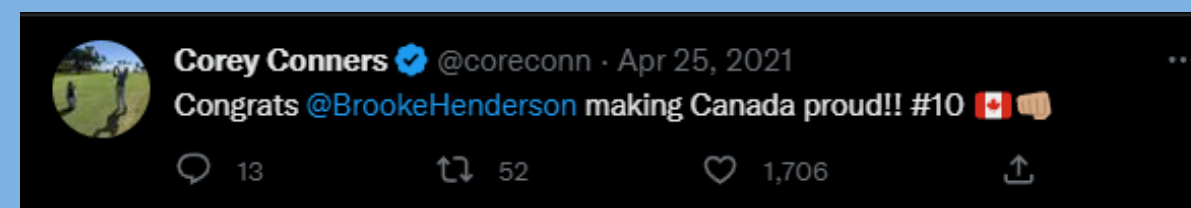
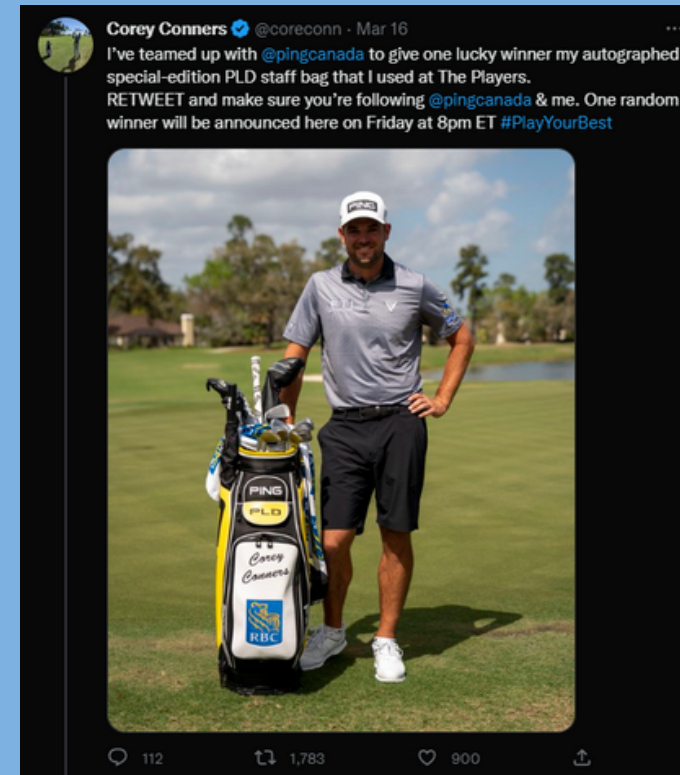
USING THE SELF-PRESENTATION THEORY 2/2

SELF-PRESENTATION THEORY:

"THE PRESENTATION OF SELF THAT INTENTIONALLY INFLUENCES OR CHANGES HOW OTHER PEOPLE SEE YOU"



A FEW EXAMPLES VIA SOCIAL MEDIA (TWITTER)



FINAL DISCUSSION

FROM THE EVIDENCE, HOW DOES CONNERS PRESENT HIMSELF ONLINE USING THE SELF-PRESENTATION THEORY?

- **Captain Canada:** With the evidence from his Instagram and Twitter account, almost every post within the last year reflects something to do with his Canadian Heritage. This is achieved through promoting Canadian golf venues, congratulating other Canadian players, or promoting a sponsorship/giveaway that has something Canadian tied into it, such as Tim Hortons.
- **Mr. Nice Guy:** Corey Connors presents himself on social media in a way that persuades the fan to see him as a genuinely nice guy, kind-hearted, and someone who is passionate about representing his country on the biggest stage. He is seen to be charitable and even seen to be donating back to sports and recreation for young children and youth.
- **Mr. Positive/Family Friendly:** Connors comes off with a positive impression. Connors keeps his content joyful and family-friendly where he always has a smile on his face and often posts images with friends or family, leading the viewer to believe the player is more than just an athlete, but one that cares about his image outside of sports. He does not post controversial content and allows his content to reach a younger audience.
- **Dedicated to the game (golf):** At first glance, Connors is perceived to be an athlete who carries himself well and one that is a good sport through his dedication to the sport. Of course, if fans see how kind, happy, and sportsmanlike he is, they will look to view more of his content where he is the most... on the golf course.



IMAGE:

1. CAPTAIN CANADA



FROM THE EVIDENCE, WHY DOES HE PROMOTE THIS VERSION OF HIMSELF? 1/2

- **Representing Canada's image:** It's important for him as the face of Canadian Golf, to promote himself in this positive and proud manner. It looks good on his values and beliefs as a Canadian whilst at the same time, reflecting positively on Canada.
- **Increased personal viewership:** This could be an effort to draw in more Canadian viewership for himself that will solidify the role of the "go-to guy" in the eyes of the fans. In comparison to other Canadian golfers, he will be the one receiving the most attention due to the type and amount of Canadian content he is producing.
- **Engage more fans with golf:** This could be a strategy to promote and further engage the Canadian Audience with golf. By posting about more Canadian-related things, he's bound to draw in more Canadian-based users to his golf content, and golf content as a whole.
- **Drive Canadian golf:** He wants to utilize his platform to sponsor and promote activities or events that will further encourage the game of golf in Canada: For example, gestures from Tim Horton's, PING Canada golf bag giveaways, encouraging people to sign up (sponsorship) for Canadian golf tournaments.
- **RECAP:** Overall, I believe he promotes himself in this manner to positively bring more attention/drive to Canadian golf, but at the same time, wants to show he is a proud Canadian and one that wants to represent his country. On the other hand, this version of himself will be beneficial to him from a business perspective in drawing more Canadian engagement and viewership that will build a relationship with more and more fans overtime through these types of social media posts

IMAGE:

2. MR. NICE GUY / MR. POSITIVE



FROM THE EVIDENCE, WHY DOES HE PROMOTE THIS VERSION OF HIMSELF? 2/2



- **Positively benefits his brand and reputation:** It's important for him to promote himself in this positive, friendly, genuine, and welcoming manner because doing so, it will help to bring in more followers, viewers, and fans while also creating an admiring reputation.
- **Increases sponsorships, promotions, and attention:** Through a positively constructed brand reputation and image on social media, sponsors will be more intrigued to sponsor him and his product. The more likable, popular, and reputable he is, the more he will benefit in viewership promotions and sponsorships.
- **Imperative to his overall success:** By being a role model, and a likable figure in his sport, he will convince fans to be on his side rather than against him whilst maximizing his viewership (family-friendly). This should essentially prevent hate online, at the golf course, and in tournaments, and cause less anxiety, stress, or worry of underperforming.
- **Acceptance in association:** If he is viewed poorly due to his decision-making away from the game on social media, this will affect his likelihood to be welcomed in the PGA. He must promote a version of himself that will not only benefit him but work towards expanding the PGA audience and earning them more revenue.
- **RECAP:** Overall, I believe he promotes himself in this manner to positively benefit himself as an athlete and product. By being a loveable role model, one that presents himself positively on the internet, he will by default receive more attention and earn more revenue for himself and the sport.

FROM THE EVIDENCE, HOW SUCCESSFUL IS THEIR USE OF MEDIA?

DEFINING MY METRIC FOR SUCCESS:

" THE ATHLETE UTILIZES THE NEW MEDIA TO CONSISTENTLY GROW THEMSELVES AND THE SPORT"



DOES HE MEET THE METRIC FOR SUCCESS - YES

- **Successfully grew himself:** Since the creation of his two social media accounts in 2010, Conners has managed to grow his platform from 0 followers to 23.8k and 22.5k on Instagram and Twitter. He's successfully managed to create a trusted community for himself in the media world.
- **Successfully benefits himself:** When comparing his posts from the beginning of his accounts to now, he's come a long way in creating more beneficiary opportunities for his brand. This is executed through obtaining sponsorship deals with the game's biggest brands.
- **Successfully built a reputable brand/image:** Judging by the way he is talked about and viewed within the golf world, Conners has successfully branded himself in a positive, reputable manner. This is obtained through his status amongst competitors, and how people (comments) interact with him.
- **Successfully helped drive golf (PGA):** The PGA Tour saw an increase of up to 30% in 2021 with the PGA championship opening at a 20-year high. With his promotion and affiliation online with the PGA and its product, Conners has successfully contributed to driving success for the sport and the PGA.
- **RECAP:** Overall, Conners meets my metric for success. As a Canadian leader in a sport that contains minimal of this heritage, he accurately has grown himself and the game over time, substantially within the last year.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COREY CONNERS TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL WITH SOCIAL MEDIA USE 1/3

WHAT TO IMPROVE

- **Be more engaging/interactive:** On both of his social media accounts, Connors does not interact with his fans in the comments or mentions. Being more engaging allows for a closer connection to be made and the ability to build a closer relationship with his viewers. This can be achieved by replying, liking more posts, quote tweeting, and mentions.
- **Be more consistent:** Connors has posted just 22 tweets and 9 Instagram posts since the beginning of 2021. In total, he only has 295 tweets and 56 Instagram posts. Connors should aim to post more consistently and commit to valuing social media by being more active on his social media pages. By doing this, he can further grow himself, his brand, and the PGA's audience at a more consistent pace.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COREY CONNERS TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL WITH SOCIAL MEDIA USE 2/3

HOW TO TAKE ACTION ON SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

- **Hire a social media manager:** Judging by the lack of posting and the communication he uses in his posts, I'm convinced he runs his own pages. With a social media manager, they can commit to building your brand for you but at a more consistent pace, so he doesn't have to. Their job is to help grow your brand and can help to improve in areas he struggles in such as interacting with fans and posting consistently.
- **Commit to a posting schedule:** If he does in fact run his pages, and wants to continue to do so, Connors should commit to a posting schedule that will ensure he is posting to his pages regularly. This will likely increase his brand in all dimensions from engagement, to new viewership, and more sponsorships (revenue).



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COREY CONNERS TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL WITH SOCIAL MEDIA USE 3/3

WHY SHOULD CONNERS IMPROVE HIS SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE?

- **To grow his brand/revenue as much as possible:** While Connors is at the peak of his career, he should be utilizing the opportunity while he can. Studies have shown that athletes face a significant drop off in revenue and popularity once retired from the sport. Therefore, in his prime it's important he self-markets his personal brand as much as possible.
- **To maximize attention/engagement towards himself and the game (PGA):** By promoting all the good things he and the PGA does, more fans are likely to tune in to watch him and the PGA. While posting a ton of positive images and messages of himself, he will be more likable. This could take away the stress and anxiety of playing in tournaments with less pressure/less hated. From a game standpoint, promoting the PGA is important in inspiring the current and next generation of golfers to pursue that association over rivals, such as up and coming competitors: I.e. LIV Golf League.



CONCLUSION - COREY CONNERS SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS



FINAL TAKEAWAYS:

- Given the way Corey presents himself online, I'd say he's found success in what he's trying to accomplish for himself and his brand. Over the course of his social media accounts existence, there has been substantial growth which has earned him sponsorship deals, a major following, and success in the sport.
- With saying that, I had some suggestions that I believe can be very beneficial in growing these numbers even more. Becoming consistent with his postings and engaging with his audience (Canadian and Internationally) can tremendously boost monetary opportunities, viewership, and strengthen his brand reputation/image even further for the longevity of his career and beyond.

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