



**NINETY PER CENT** of executives polled by Robert Half International Inc. said they'd gladly roll out the welcome mat for a former employee who left in good standing.

Metro Vancouver News Services

**THIS REINFORCES** the value of not burning bridges with employees. "Creating a positive last impression leaves the door open to return if the new opportunity doesn't work out," said Max Messmer, CEO of Robert Half International.

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# Duo turns golf into duffers biz



TIA ABELL/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Not even rain can dampen the enthusiasm of The Next Golf Adventure owner/operators Mark Burke, left, and Tom Monaghan, who will launch their travelling golf academy this week.

## Pros quit Capilano, create 'travelling golf academy'

By TIA ABELL  
for Metro Vancouver

A hot idea can seem to catch fire all on its own.

Take the sun-soaked trip golf pros Tom Monaghan and Mark Burke planned last January for six members from the Capilano Golf and Country Club, where the pair taught.

The pros accompanied the group as tour leaders and instructors; the members enjoyed an all-inclusive holiday plus attentive golf instruction under Phoenix's blue skies.

"It was something for us to do in the winter time," says Monaghan, 34, a transplanted Newfoundlander (with little Corner Brook accent left) who graduated from Orlando's San Diego Golf Academy in 1997.

"And it kept us in teaching mode ... we wanted to take our members and make some money, get some sunshine, play golf and jump-start our members' season."

But before long, other club members had heard of the excursion, explains 37-year-old Burke, a Woodbridge, Ont., native who competed on the Canadian Tour and the Golden Bear Tour.

"Guys would come up to us and say why didn't we get an invite?"

The pros knew they were onto something. Two weeks after the Phoenix trip, they began dreaming about a September adventure to the Bandon Dunes Resort in Oregon.

Monaghan got on the phone to do some research.

And ...

"... the next thing I knew, I was booking it," he says with a smile.

It meant risking a \$5,000 deposit, but the magic of word-of-mouth didn't let

him down, and the trip sold out. That's when the pair asked a golfing acquaintance and successful businessman to write up a business plan for them. Within four days, they had the plan and his strong recommendation to go global.

"We cost it out and saw that if we did these trips with three-quarters of the year travelling, we could make as much as we do at the club, or more," Monaghan says.

They incorporated as The Next Golf Adventure (thenextgolfadventure.com) in May and began organizing trips to luxury golf resorts in Florida, California and Mexico for winter/spring 2007.

They're launching their new "travelling golf academy" this week.

It's meant quitting their jobs at the golf club in September, but the pros are fearless — and their partnership seems ideal.

"Tom makes it happen," says Burke.

"Mark is the concept guy," counters Monaghan.

Burke replies, "It's both of us. When we get together, the ideas just flow. When I look back over the past four months, I think, 'Oh, my God, look where we are today.'"

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