

# Achieving Greatness Through Teamwork

An Interview with **E. Randall Clouser**,  
Head of Marketing, Distribution and Regional Management, Zurich North America



Randy Clouser honors two community leaders for their inspirational work in improving the lives of New Orleans children at the 2015 Zurich Classic. Melissa Sawyer, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Youth Empowerment Project, and Gerald Williams, Co-Founder and CEO of Directed Initiatives for Youth/Excite! All Stars, each received a Zurich Classic Community Impact Award.

**EDITORS' NOTE** Randall Clouser joined Zurich as Chief Executive Officer of Zurich Corporate Solutions in 1996. He moved to Switzerland as the Group's Chief Marketing Officer and subsequently became Chief Operating Officer and Head of the Growth Office. In 2008, he returned to the U.S. where he is currently Executive Vice President and Head of Marketing, Distribution, and Regional Management for Zurich North America. Clouser earned a B.S. degree from American University and an M.S. degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He is a Wharton Fellow and was named a David Rockefeller Fellow for 2011.

**COMPANY BRIEF** Zurich Insurance Group (Zurich; [zurich.com](http://zurich.com)) is a leading multi-line insurer that serves its customers in global and local markets. With about 54,000 employees, it provides a wide range of property and casualty and life insurance products and services in more than 210 countries and territories. Zurich's customers include individuals, small businesses, and mid-sized and large companies, as well as multinational corporations. Zurich has strong financial ratings: A+ by AM Best and AA- by Standard & Poor's. The Group reported an operating profit of \$4.5 billion in 2016. The Group is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland, where it was founded in 1872.

In the United States, Zurich is a top five commercial insurer, providing customers with more than 100 years of experience. It holds

market-leading positions in its chosen markets. It's a leading writer of Construction, #2 writer of Crop Insurance and #3 writer of Surety. Ninety percent of Fortune 500 companies trust Zurich to help them understand and protect themselves from risk.

**Will you talk about how critical the Zurich Classic has become to the culture of Zurich, and what that has meant for the company?**

When I was the Group Chief Marketing Officer in Switzerland, I took that responsibility to build the Zurich brand globally. We had 30 brands around the world and wanted to create one global brand that reflected the way we do business. When we looked across North America, it appeared that a PGA TOUR sponsorship was an ideal opportunity for us to launch our global brand in North America, while also connecting and engaging with the community of New Orleans, as well as our customers and brokers.

Several months after we had our first tournament, Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans – that challenged us in many ways. However, it was also a great opportunity to exhibit the power and strength of the Zurich brand, our commitment to our customers and the community, and our commitment to helping rebuild New Orleans. It has been a wonderful platform to showcase our brand in action.

**How intense has community support been for the Zurich Classic?**

The Zurich Classic alone generates about \$40 million annually for the local economy. The tournament is the primary fundraiser for the Fore!Kids Foundation, which is the local charity organization that runs the tournament. As a result of this three-way collaboration

between Zurich, the Fore!Kids Foundation, and the PGA TOUR, we have donated more than \$17 million to more than 100 charities that support more than 200,000 children in Louisiana. Behind every PGA TOUR golf tournament is a charity that benefits from these events. It's really what makes the PGA TOUR sponsorship so special to us.

**In 2017, the Zurich Classic will debut a new team format. Will you talk about the vision and creation of that concept?**

The team format in 2017 is the product of the great teamwork between the PGA TOUR and Zurich.

We worked together to find a new and different way to improve the event and the impact it delivers. The team format is unique as most PGA TOUR events are stroke play. The Zurich Classic is in the middle of the FedExCup season, so we were looking for a way to differentiate and showcase a key attribute of our brand, which is teamwork.

This event will showcase some of the best golfers in the world who we would typically see play in a team format at the Presidents Cup or Ryder Cup, but now you'll see them at our PGA TOUR event. Some of the golfers already paired up include the 2016 Rio Olympic Game gold and silver medal winners Justin Rose and Henrik Stenson, as well as the two most recent PLAYERS Championship winners, Jason Day and Rickie Fowler. We'll have Billy Horshel and Matt Every, two Florida Gator grads, playing together.

**Was it important to get the players on board, and have you seen the excitement from them?**



Clouser records a video message for Zurich employees after a business session at the 2016 Zurich Classic.





PGA TOUR golfer Jason Day and Randy Clouser read the greens at TPC Louisiana during the 2016 Zurich Classic Pro-Am.

The excitement has been tremendous. We were able to get feedback from the Zurich Golf Ambassadors on this kind of event, and all of them were very excited about the idea – it is unique and gives them a chance to team up with some people they enjoy playing with. With their feedback, we had a good feeling that the rest of the players would be supportive of the team format. It wasn't a done deal until the PGA TOUR players' board approved it. Overall, the PGA TOUR did a lot of work to make sure this is something the players would support.

**Will you talk about the importance of the golf ambassador program from the company's view?**

Our golf ambassador program has helped Zurich expand the reach of golf outside of the Zurich Classic. We have the opportunity to feature our ambassadors for customer and broker events at a global level throughout the year. It extends the investment we have in the Zurich Classic beyond the week of that event.

Our ambassadors are all people that reflect the brand with great integrity. They are very involved in community and charity and not just by being some of the world's best players; they are great individuals.

**Zurich recently expanded their relationship with Jason Day, the number-two world golfer today. Will you talk about that specific relationship?**

We started our relationship with Jason several years ago. The first event he played in after becoming one of our ambassadors was an event he won. After establishing that relationship, he went on to win a major and several other PGA TOUR tournaments, and has since become the number-two golfer in the world.

We recently expanded our relationship with him to include branding his golf bag, which we think will connect the Zurich brand even closer to golf fans around the world.

**In terms of the Classic this year, how important is it that the event is aligned with business strategy and culture?**

The Zurich Classic is a great example of our commitment to our customers, brokers, employees, and shareholders, as well as the community – it touches on all of those key dimensions of our business. Additionally, the new team format represents our culture of teamwork and collaboration. It is an

extension of the Zurich brand in action and a powerful opportunity for us as a business.

When we think about business and teamwork and golf and teamwork, there are three qualities I want in a golf partner and a business colleague: commitment, honesty, and grit – determination and a will to succeed. These play together quite nicely.

**How important has it been internally to the morale of the people at Zurich to have engagement from leadership on down, and how important is it to engage them in what you're doing around the Zurich Classic so they can feel a part of it?**

Zurich values the opportunity to give back. Zurich North America employees volunteered nearly 27,500 hours in 2016. We gave \$2.8 million in corporate and employee donations to charities in North America last year. A good part of our total giving is raised through Zurich-sponsored fundraising activities. With the Make-A-Wish Foundation, which is one of Zurich's six core charities, our employees participated in nearly 400 volunteer opportunities and raised more than \$150,000 for the organization. Giving is part of the fabric of who we are as a company and as a team. We want to bring the Zurich Classic to our employee base.

During the week of the event, we have a number of things we do so employees can be a part of all that we do there. From our TV message on the Golf Channel, Mike Foley, our CEO for Zurich North America, is actually speaking to the employees; Zurich employees are invited to watch the telecast in the office. We also have contests where employees can pick the Zurich Classic winner and win a trip for next year's event. We really help our employees become a part of the Zurich Classic experience and hear the messaging and activities we're involved in. We try to connect them as much as we can that week, and it amplifies our messages around community, teamwork and customers.

**Many might not be aware of the type of work that some of the PGA TOUR golfers and the golf industry in general do, which is extremely charitable and makes a real impact. Would you touch on some of that?**

What makes all of these players – from Jason Day to Rickie Fowler to Ben Crane – so interesting is that they understand golf is a game where one has to go out and earn everything they accomplish every week. By the very nature of the game, many of these players appreciate what they have achieved, where they are, and what they have. As a result, they feel a sense of responsibility to give back.

Justin Rose, for example, supports Blessings in a Backpack, a nonprofit organization that provides food on the weekends to school children across the country who might otherwise go hungry. Through this organization, he has done a

tremendous amount of work to help feed children who basically only get a school lunch each day – on weekends, they don't get the nutrition they need.

What he and his wife, Kate, have done through their foundation to help children in Orlando, and expand that to a national campaign to help feed children, is inspiring to see in terms of how much energy they put into their foundation.

**Economic cycles can go up and down, but it seems that no matter where the business is at Zurich, the commitment to corporate responsibility and community remains at the forefront. How important is it to have buy-in at the top to make this effective?**

It's part of our culture, and Zurich leadership set the example. Quite frankly, it's also a fundamental part of our employees' lives as well, so it's a natural thing for us to bring it forward as part of our culture.

One example is our work around resiliency. This is something we learned from Katrina – how unprepared some communities are to handle natural disaster. Every dollar spent in prevention saves five dollars in future losses. It's money well spent.

As a commercial insurer, Zurich plays a critical role in the economy and in society. Far beyond simply paying claims, we help prepare businesses before extreme weather events and enable them to get back up and running and allow people to get back to work after these events. Investment in the prevention of natural disaster not only has financial benefit to the community but to many people who don't have flood insurance or are displaced as a result of disaster. It shows a real compassion for helping communities be stronger, better, and more prepared to deal with risk. ●



Jason Day debuted his Zurich-branded golf bag at the 2017 Farmers Insurance Open.