

FROM LAUNCH TO BREAKTHROUGH



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GILLY GROUP

2026 CASE STUDY

CLIENT OVERVIEW

Established in January, 2026, Messy Teddy is an emerging apparel brand entering the golf space, aiming to carve out a distinct identity in a market dominated by legacy brands and traditional aesthetics. Based out of Miami, the luxury men's wear brand is positioned at the intersection of golf and lifestyle, creating pieces that help men stand out both on and off the course without sacrificing quality or respect for the game's traditions.

THE CHALLENGE

The golf apparel space is crowded and often looks the same. With the emergence of YouTube golf and a younger generational influence into the space, there has been constant push and pull between style, tradition, luxury, quality, and functionality.

New brands are facing established legacy competitors with consumers offering deep loyalty to their chosen label. Leading names have fought to earn credibility in a relationship-driven industry where word of mouth and trends can make or break a brand.

Currently, the space is saturated with repetitive design and messaging- with a fine line between being too disruptive or too generic for the mix of traditional golfers and the new wave of players.

Messy Teddy didn't just need visibility and validity, they needed clear differentiation.

GILLY GROUP APPROACH

We focused on making Messy Teddy feel distinct, relevant, and intentional from day one:

Brand Positioning & Creative Direction

We helped to define a unique identity that walked the line of rebellious and traditional while also maintaining functionality and quality in a space where style normally meant a lack in craftsmanship. It was important to create a tone that broke from conventional golf messaging- something that felt modern, confident, and recognizable was important to differentiate Messy Teddy. It was imperative that we help direct the balance to support both the wholesale club buyers along with the desired consumer target, the "Messy Man".

Content Strategy

We helped to direct their digital marketing team to create content that highlighted an aspirational lifestyle, not just product. We focused on storytelling that made the brand feel cultural, real, authentic- not transactional. We highlighted opportunities for visual and physiological cues that keep the brand in play within the golf space while still setting them apart from the rest of the landscape.

Industry Integration

Through a network cultivated over 25 years of experience in the space, we seamlessly introduced the brand into the golf ecosystem by leveraging key relationships, events, and real-world touch points to build instant credibility for the brand across multiple verticals.

EXECUTION

OVERALL STRATEGY

Gilly Group created the growth strategy to help Messy Teddy saturate two different markets, both essential to the success of the brand. This strategy balanced wholesale/private club credibility with culturally relevant consumer demand. This meant helping MT establish legitimacy within traditional golf channels and ecosystems- strengthening the credibility within pro shops among the private club members, club pros (buyers), and TOUR players. Simultaneously, we helped to build digital awareness and social engagement through collaborations with talent and influentials in the space in an effort to tell the brands story in a way that resonates with the younger consumer.

PGA SHOW LAUNCH

We began by supporting the launch of the Messy Teddy brand at the 2026 PGA Show in Orlando, introducing the brand as a men's luxury lifestyle and golf apparel company to top industry decision makers and influentials. During the show the Gilly Group team offered on-site sales support throughout the week and during the AGM breakout session. GG Leadership acted as a spokesperson for internal MT content along with media outlets to amplify the booth's presence through digital exposure and industry-facing platforms. Throughout the week, we facilitated meaningful introductions between the brand, key industry stakeholders, and potential partners, ensuring Messy Teddy entered the market with both visibility and credibility.

ESTABLISHED INFLUENCER/AFFILIATE PROGRAM

Our team developed and executed the MT influencer and affiliate program to help the brand establish credibility and relevancy among the new entrants of the DTC golf world- mainly focusing on influential talent in the YouTube Golf space (content creators, instructors, golf-pros), college and pro athletes, and musicians with strong younger audiences. This included brand and influencer research, outreach, negotiation, tracking deliverables/performance, product distribution, and ensuring brand messaging remained consistent and appropriate among a mass breadth of channels.

PRODUCT SEEDING

In conjunction with the influencer program, we established a relevant product seeding strategy- leveraging our industry network and deep understanding of the competitive landscape to identify and distribute to the most relevant voices, driving authentic visibility and brand credibility.

ESTABLISHED SALES CYCLE AND TEAM

Supporting Messy Teddy in creating their sales cycle process and team was an integral step in the building of the company, particularly given the unique cadence of the golf season versus traditional retail drops. We began by defining key regions for wholesale expansion, targeting top private clubs, and supporting the buildout of both national and regional sales teams under Gilly Group's guidance. From there, we established a clear sales cycle based on showing, selling, and shipping- based on the guidance of industry fashion expert Marty Hackel. This foundation allowed for us to help advise key operational steps such as developing sample sets and kits for the sales reps,

creating a trade show schedule, establishing an embroider, and understanding the overall timing and logistics- ensuring the brand was set up to execute effectively within the golf industry's seasonal framework.

INDUSTRY EXPERTISE

One of the most valuable contributions to the Messy Teddy brand was our expertise of the golf industry. Everything from a deep understanding of the TOUR schedule and the significance of key events, to implementing most used platforms such as RepSpark for wholesale accounts- it all became a crucial step in moving MT to becoming a golf-centric brand. Beyond operations, we provided ongoing guidance on industry trends, history, consumer behavior, and brand positioning, ensuring MT aligned with what resonates in golf, and avoided what doesn't.

ACTIVATION PLANNING

Looking into 2027, we have begun planning with a focus on high-impact, brand-building activations, including activations like an Augusta host house and pop-up retail experiences at key tournaments. These moments are designed to generate buzz around the Messy Teddy brand while integrating notable partners, talent, and influencers; positioning the brand with credibility and creating meaningful experiences for both clients and consumers.

STRATEGIC BRANDING

The Gilly Group team played a key role in Messy Teddy finding its voice in a crowded space-. By leveraging creative signals like "Messy Teddy Pink" and "The Unignorable Man", we crafted a story different than current apparel brands in the space. Drawing on our experience, we guided the brand to be both unique and disruptive while remaining respectful to the private club environment. Additionally, we addressed a common correlation in the "Instagram apparel" world- where online-focused apparel is often seen as low-quality or cheap. We connected MT with top digital creators to specifically position the brand in an effort to help reposition how consumers view premium golf lifestyle apparel and "Instagram apparel" alike.

PGA TOUR PLAYER PARTNERSHIP

Within 3 months, we took on Tyler Collet, Defending Champion of the PGA Professional Championship and PGA Professional at John's Island Club, as our first Messy Teddy Athlete. This partnership offered instant credibility to the brand in the eyes of the private club and professional golf world.

WEB AND SOCIAL ADVISING

Gilly Group elevated the Messy Teddy social presence and website experience with the modern golf consumer in mind. We guided content creation based on storytelling that felt authentic to the game while still building aspirational moments with product-driven value, on course performance, and a community aspect. We ensured that the experience on both web and socials was tailored to how golfers actually shop and explore- whether that's discovering the apparel's craftsmanship and understanding the benefits, exploring the style, or engaging the brand's broader story.

LIFESTYLE PHOTOSHOOT

Our team guided the first essential lifestyle photoshoot for the golf and lifestyle line, leveraging our connection with Streamsong Golf Club to select locations that perfectly align with the brand's aesthetic. From there, we developed a comprehensive shot list and carefully selected models to ensure every image captures both on-course and off-course moments. The result is a set of assets that authentically reflect the aspirational lifestyle of today's golfer, bringing the brand's story and personality to life.

BUDGET FOR 2026-2027 YEAR

We worked closely with the Messy Teddy leadership to build out their first-year budget, ensuring that it aligned with both the brand goals and realistic growth expectations as the company plans to scale within the coming year. From content production and influencer activation to on site events and hospitality programming, we mapped out where to invest in order to create the most impact early on.

RESULTS

POSITIONED MESSY TEDDY AS A DIFFERENTIATED VOICE IN GOLF APPAREL

Strategic partnerships with TOUR players like Tyler Collet, high-impact activations, and lifestyle content strengthened the brand's story, positioning Messy Teddy as a premium, disruptive golf lifestyle brand.

BROKE THROUGH A SATURATED MARKET WITH A CLEAR IDENTITY

Messy Teddy successfully established a presence across both traditional golf channels and the DTC lifestyle market. The brand is seen as credible, stylish, and functional.

CREATED STRONG EVENT VISIBILITY AND IMPACT

The brand's debut at the 2026 PGA Show resulted in high-profile exposure among top industry stakeholders, fans, media, and influencers.

BUILT EARLY RECOGNITION AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES THROUGH INFLUENCER ENGAGEMENT

The influencer program generated authentic engagement across YouTube, social media, and college/pro-athlete networks, establishing Messy Teddy as both relevant and aspirational in the new golf lifestyle space.

CREATED A STRONG SALES AND OPERATIONAL FOUNDATION

The establishment of a structured sales cycle, regional/national teams, and seasonal operational processes enabled Messy Teddy to execute with efficiency, aligning product launches with the golf season and maximizing wholesale opportunities.

CREATED A FOUNDATION FOR BRAND LOYALTY AND FUTURE GROWTH

The lifestyle photoshoot, social advising, and web enhancements created a compelling digital presence, combining aspirational storytelling with product-driven value, boosting engagement, and shaping how golfers perceive the brand online.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

The Messy Teddy case demonstrated that balancing private club and TOUR credibility with cultural relevance among younger consumers is essential to the success for brands entering the current golf lifestyle space. Our focus on strategic visibility in forms of sponsorship, player partnerships, influencer affiliates, and high-profile activations rapidly build trust and recognition among the golf ecosystem while engaging with relevant individuals who help accelerate the brand awareness and maintain its authenticity.

All the while, nothing is more important for a launching brand than creating a well-defined sales cycle and operational strategy to ensure that the brand can scale effectively within golfs unique calendar and restrictions. Finally, a high-quality lifestyle brand paired with storytelling and a distinct brand voice can create aspirational moments that resonate beyond a the crowded golf apparel market.