

READ THIS IF YOU ARE GOING TO THE MOON PALACE CANCUN

I recently went to the Moon Palace Golf & Resort in Cancun, Mexico. You should be aware that they are very aggressive in pushing some type of a membership on you (they do not call it a time-share). In brief, upon your arrival to the Resort, you will be offered the opportunity for a 90 minute “tour” of the Resort. If you take this tour, you will be entitled to some type of a prize, typically \$150 in spa credits (don’t get too excited, a one-hour massage costs approximately \$200). This is not actually a tour – they will drive you in a cart to one of the three hotels in the complex. Then they will take you for drinks to discuss the various membership packages. Then they will take you to the “membership room”, where there will be other guests who are being solicited. When a guest joins a membership, the salespeople will stand and clap (it would not surprise me if the people joining a membership were actually hotel employees disguised as guests).

The most common package they will push you to purchase is an \$18,000 package (they will probably start higher than that so wait till they come down to that number). When the sales woman offered me the \$18,000 membership, I told her I arrived at the Resort less than 24 hours ago and that I would get back to her. She said fine but that this \$18,000 package was only good that day, and it would cost \$43,000 tomorrow!! Don’t believe it - the same \$18,000 package was available to me a few days later. If you don’t take the \$18,000 package, they will offer you a \$3,900 package (they will tell you this \$3,900 is a special deal only for you!).

In brief, joining a membership entitles you to some future preferred rates at the Resort. But remember these sales peoples are professionals – they will seek to take advantage of you so be aware and understand the details. For example, the “preferred rates” are subject to availability, and subject to increases each year by the Consumer Price Index **plus 6%**. Imagine how you would feel if you paid \$18,000, and then you could not book the week you wanted because they allegedly had too many “members” coming to the Resort that week (but I bet you could still come to the Resort if you paid the higher regular rate!).

At the initial meeting with the sales woman, I said I would have to think about it. The salespeople left messages with me every day. After 5 days, I decided I would purchase the \$3,900 package – I liked the Resort and, although I was wary of the salespeople, I figured I would not get hurt too bad if I only paid \$3,900 (as opposed to \$18,000). So when I met with a new salesperson, I told him I wanted the \$3,900 package. He said fine but that the \$18,000 package is a better deal, and that he would give me (and my kids) three free vacations (one week each) if I took the \$18,000 package. I had him repeat that three times – three totally free vacations if I took the \$18,000 package (I would get two rooms during each vacation – one room for my wife and I, and one room for my kids). I said fine I would take the \$18,000 package. The salesperson said I would have to make payment immediately. The salesperson followed me to my room to get my credit card. Then we went back to the “membership room”. At the membership room, the salesperson (Gilberto Melendez) started to change things. First, he told me that I would be given a certain dollar credit for the vacations – which meant that they could charge me if the

cost of the vacations increased during the next year (which they were certain to do) and second, they said I would have to pay approximately \$1,000 for the second room I was getting on my free vacations. When I told the salesperson that our agreement was that I would get three totally free vacations with two rooms, he apologized and said there was some type of a misunderstanding. There was no misunderstanding – the salesperson intentionally misled me. I no longer felt comfortable doing business with these people and I left the room.

By the way, my salesperson told me that approximately 40% of the people that they pitch, join some type of a membership. Don't believe it.

My advice to you is the following: do not purchase any type of a membership from these guys. They are professionals –and good at it – and they just want your money. Beware.

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