



Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries

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Promoting your club



Clubs need to be competitive on and off the field, so promoting, or marketing, your club is essential. Similarly, the retention of members is as important as attracting new members, and keeping the ones you have ensures the clubs future.

What is marketing?

Marketing can be defined as a process by which individuals and groups obtain what they want through creating, offering and exchanging products of value with others. Importantly, it is an essential part of a clubs operation and must be planned.

All sport and recreation clubs undertake marketing, although they are often unaware that they are actually doing so. Creating and maintaining a clubs website and/or Facebook page; placing information about membership registrations in the local newspaper; offering a discount on court hire prices to induce greater use of the courts; or redecorating the club facilities are all examples of formal marketing activities.

An example of informal marketing involves a person enquiring about joining a surf life saving club and the secretary being particularly helpful with providing the membership information over the phone. A mother of a prospective junior tennis club member watching a coach conduct a lesson with the children looking bored and not enjoying the session is a less positive example of informal marketing.

Who does marketing?

The above examples of marketing indicate that different individuals within your sport and recreation club conduct marketing activities. It is particularly useful to appoint an individual or small team as marketing officers to oversee the development and implementation of the clubs marketing strategies.

Word of mouth is an important marketing tool. Having people in the community speaking positively and enthusiastically about the clubs activities is invaluable.

Marketing tools

The marketing mix or marketing tools a club can use can be classified into seven categories:

Product: includes the quality and accessibility of the services the club or group provides. For example, competitions and social functions.

Price: includes the cost of membership fees and discounts offered.

Place: includes the clubrooms or the facilities where competitions are conducted.

Promotion: includes the advertising of the club, a promotion at the local shopping centre, an article in the local community newspaper or the use of social media.

People: includes the type of people the club has as volunteers particularly in the areas of coaches and team managers and the club committee. These people are the 'front of house' representatives of the club. They provide the club services to potential, new and existing members. They can make or break the reputation of the club.

Positioning: includes ensuring the club understands where it sits in terms of other sports available to the community. Things like when the club plays its fixtures – on the weekend or one or two evenings a week need to be thought through as this flexibility is attractive to many people that have work and family responsibilities that restrict their ability to participate.

Packaging: includes the club providing its services, taking into account its member's needs which are not necessarily the same. For example, clubs that want to attract families to participate can package activities so all family members can participate at the same time without having to make numerous trips back and forth from home and spend an excessive amount of time participating in club activities.

Developing a simple promotional plan

A promotional plan does not need to be particularly difficult to develop or the strategies costly to implement. There are many different ways to develop a plan.

A club needs to put a small working group together to develop the approach and the plan. The work is not difficult and the working group does not need to spend a lot of time on the task. The group needs to be made up of three to four club members that come from different age groups and different areas of the club e.g. a committee person, a player under 25 and a coach.

A simple plan for a small club would contain some basic elements including:

Objectives: promotional objectives should be specific, measurable and achievable. An example would be recruiting an additional 20 junior members by the start of competition.

Strategies: These can be developed around the marketing mix and must be targeted towards the specific target markets. Target marketing is the practice of designing and directing specific services at specific individuals or groups of customers.

For example, if your club was trying to attract new junior members you would need to develop strategies to specifically attract juniors, or if the club wants more support from its local government it needs to ensure the council is aware of what they do and how well they do it.

In the development of these strategies the method the club will use to deliver the message also needs to be documented e.g. use of social media, personal approaches, open and come and try days.

Budget: A realistic budget within the club's capabilities and focusing on low-cost or no-cost strategies is recommended.

Evaluation

Make sure strategies are put in place to see if the club has met its objectives. Some activities are easy to monitor, such as a membership drive, others will not be able to be evaluated until after the event.

Collect copies of press clippings or media coverage, records of attendances at functions or competitions, social media hits and any feedback your group receives whether it's positive or negative.

Ways to promote your club

- Electronic: for example electronic newsletters and social media outlets such as a club website and Facebook page.
 - Social media platforms such as a web page, Facebook, Snapchat, and Twitter amongst others are evolving into very powerful marketing and promotional tools. Clubs need to understand these social media platforms so they can be utilised to their full potential.
 - Online tools such as Google Analytics and Facebook Insights provide assistance in this.
- Google Analytics is a freemium web analytics service offered by Google that tracks and reports website traffic
- Facebook Insights is a pretty powerful tool for those wanting to track user interaction on their Facebook Page. All administrators of a page can see Facebook Insights and it can help track the number of active users to better understand the page performance.
- Newsletters
- Competitions
- Advertising

- Functions
- Sponsorships.

Importantly many State Sporting Associations (SSAs) have online opportunities to advertise and promote affiliated clubs. Contact your clubs SSA and explore these opportunities.

Example marketing plan for a junior club open day

Marketing objective: To recruit 20 junior members by 10 December.

Marketing strategies	Cost of strategies
Arrange date and time of Free Junior Club Open Day	–
Arrange activities/games at open day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Free coaching – Games/activities – Information desk (need welcoming volunteer and forms to record names/phone numbers of those attended) – Sausage sizzle (need volunteer) – Competition to collect names and contacts to follow up 	Sausages \$25, buns \$12, sauce \$5
Develop a flyer advertising open day	Coloured paper \$5, photocopying costs \$10
Place flyer on local community notice boards including local shopping centres, library, swimming pool and on the clubs website and other social media vehicles e.g. Facebook page etc.	–
Contact principals of local primary schools to place information in the school newsletter	–
Place information in the club newspaper offering a free soft drink for those who bring a friend who is not a member to the open day	Soft drinks \$100
Write an article and provide a photo for the local newspaper focusing on a local junior who joined up at an open day and is now representing the state	–
Consider signage – banner to be placed on the club signage company fence on main street	Signage company donated banner and \$70 for sign writing
Conduct the Free Junior Club Open Day	–
Follow up those who attended but did not join up on the day	\$25
	Total cost = \$230.00

Actual memberships gained:

22 new members each @ \$100 recruited = \$2,200

Net profit for club \$2,200 – \$230.00 = \$1970.00

Developing a detailed promotional plan

A detailed plan for a larger club or association would need to include further information such as the following:

Situational analysis – this contains information on the club, an analysis of the customers, a description of the services currently being offered, an analysis of the competition and the external environment.

Opportunity analysis – this section utilises the information from the situational analysis and identifies opportunities that need to be addressed.

Working with the media to promote your club

Focusing on the marketing tool of promotion, and one aspect that many people lack confidence in, is working with the media.

Develop a relationship with the local media outlets by approaching them and letting them know who you are how you can bring readers to their operation.

In this, many media outlets have online capacity to capture details of your club's operations such as results of competitions and use these details in their publications. The club needs to discuss how they can access these opportunities with the media outlet.

How to write a media release

Your club can communicate with the media through an invitation alerting the media to a forthcoming event, such as the opening of new clubrooms or a media release about an event which is to take place or has taken place, such as a family day.

When producing a media release:

- Make a point of finding out first names. As a general rule, give the person's title first, followed by the name (e.g. the President, Joe Smith). Otherwise, follow the style of the newspaper or magazine for which you are writing. Check the spelling. Don't feel embarrassed about asking a person to spell his or her name;
- Use simple language;
- Check the media deadlines. It is useless if it arrives late;
- Ensure the release is double spaced, with wide margins. Use only one side of the paper;
- Provide photographs, or present opportunities for photographs;
- Put the name of your club at the top to the release. The wording 'media release' should be prominently displayed; and
- Supply the name, address and telephone number of a club person to contact
- For further information. If the contact number is a place of work, it is common courtesy to inform the company that there could be calls from the media.

A good media release will answer six questions concerning the event:

- Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Remember!

Many clubs make the mistake of spending a lot of time and money on conducting promotions to recruit new members and possibly forget about retaining current members. Developing promotional strategies to improve the basic product or services the club/group provides, the attitudes of volunteers or staff towards members or customers and the standard of facilities may be less expensive and more effective in the long-term.

Other resources

This resource is part of a series which provides assistance to Western Australian sport and recreation clubs and organisations to become better managed, more sustainable and to provide good quality services to members and participants.

Other resources in the series include:

1. Starting a new club
2. Planning for your club – the future is in your hands
3. Taking the lead! A guide for club presidents
4. The club secretary – the key to efficiency
5. Show me the money – a guide for the club treasurer
6. Effective club meetings – a guide for the chairperson
7. Making meetings effective – a short guide
8. Delegation – help for the overworked committee member
9. Problem solving – a guide for clubs
10. Promoting your club
11. Seeking and servicing a sponsor
12. Establishing your club rules
13. Risky business – a club guide to risk management
14. Clubs' guide to volunteer management
15. Member protection for clubs
16. How to be an inclusive club
17. Passport into schools – linking sports with schools
18. Youth sport – junior sport policy
19. Long-term involvement – junior sport policy
20. Physical growth and maturation – junior sport policy
21. Sport pathways – junior sport policy
22. Forming links – junior sport policy
23. People making it happen – junior sport policy
24. Quality coaching – junior sport policy
25. Making sport safe – junior sport policy
26. The law and sport – junior sport policy

27. Top 20 tips for officials

28. Top 20 tips for successful coaching

You will find the full series of the booklets on Sport and Recreation (WA)'s website:

www.dsr.wa.gov.au/clubs