

# Marketing

## Spreading the Word!

**Marketing your sports club is important. And it doesn't have to be difficult or expensive. But don't pull out the coloured crayons and sticky back plastic yet! In this insert discover the 'clubwise' essential guide to the marketing your sports club.**

Marketing is traditionally thought of as something only companies do, that it costs a lot of money and it's used to increase profits. Well not so! Marketing is an essential part of running a successful sports club. It does not have to be expensive and the benefits do not have to be profit making.

In order to be effective at marketing, you don't need to have a degree in desk-top publishing or promotion! All you need is common sense, a little creativity and a simple process to follow...

### Why?

**Why is marketing important to sports clubs?**

There are a wide number of reasons why you would use marketing for your club. Some of these include:

- To raise the profile of the club;
- To increase club membership;
- To attract sponsorship;
- To improve the clubs chances of receiving grant aid;
- To encourage members to continue their affiliation;
- To attract people to club events, including fundraisers.

From the start of the marketing process be clear on the reasons for marketing. Ask yourself what it is that you are trying to achieve. This will effect they way you market your club.

### What?

Once you are clear on why you want to market, you then need to think about what exactly it is that you are marketing.

- What is the **Product** - an event, club training?

- What is the **Price** - how much will it cost and how do they pay?
- Where is the **Place** - where it is happening, what time does it happen, what day(s) / date(s) does it happen?
- Who are the **People** you are trying to attract - what are the age groups, who is eligible, are there special requirements?

You will also need to consider if there are any equipment or clothing issues, if children need consent forms, and who in the club will act as the contact person.

Sport is a special product. There are numerous benefits that can be derived from being involved in sport. These include:

- Health
- Social
- Entertainment
- Educational

Be clear on what the benefits are and include these in your marketing.

By now you should be clear on why you want to market and what it is you are marketing - next you need to think about who it is you are targeting your marketing at.

### Hot Tip:

There are many health benefits from participating in sport. Try to highlight these benefits in your marketing - it will help to attract potential participants.

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## Who?

It is essential that marketing is specific to the type of person you are trying to attract. For example, your marketing material and the places you would put that material will be different if you were trying to involve Children or Adults. Therefore you need to identify your target group. These might be:

- Junior Members;
- Performance Players;
- Social Members;
- Volunteers;
- Businesses or Companies;

## How?

There are a number of ways to market your club, some more suitable than others. In the main most clubs will market in one or more of the following ways:

### Advertising:

Advertising does not have to be expensive. Depending on how you do it, it can be very inexpensive or even free!

Try to submit press releases to your local paper and radio station, telling them about the sessions and events you are running. Posters and Flyers are also a good way to advertise cheaply. These can be distributed to all sorts of places. Try to think about

where the target group is likely to be and where they are likely to see the poster or flyer. For example:

- Playgroups;
- Schools;
- Colleges and Universities;
- Supermarkets / Shops;
- Social Clubs;
- Community / Sports Centres;
- Restaurants / Cafes
- Tourist Centres / Transport providers.

### Events:

Events are a great way of getting people involved. Social / fun events attract good numbers. Open days or come and try events are a good idea but make sure you advertise well! You could also think about being represented at other community events, such as gala's or fun days. Many of these have stalls you can take to show off your club. Keep in mind you could also use these events for raising funds!

### Personal Selling:

The majority of club membership comes from word of mouth. This is why club committees must work hard to ensure their members are happy! Encourage existing members to sell the club to their friends. You could make this a fun event, when every member has to bring a pal or

colleague along at a specific time.

Encourage members to bring along family. Even if they don't want to participate there are a number of other roles they can take on!

### Direct Mail:

Depending on the size of your club this can be a little more expensive. However, mailing flyers directly to people's homes is an effective method of marketing. If nothing else they can only lose it in their own home! Find out if there are any other agencies that mail out large quantities of information, for example through the governing body or local association. It may be possible for them to include your flyer.

### E-Mail / Internet:

E-mail is an effective way of reaching your existing members. Try to ensure that you ask for e-mail addresses on registration forms. Setting up your own club web-site also enables people from throughout the world to see what you have to offer. Your Web-site can then be linked to the Local Authority Sports Development site and your National Governing Body. To get help visit:

[www.thisisnorthscotland.co.uk](http://www.thisisnorthscotland.co.uk)

Youngsters in your club are probably very effective on the computer so put the word around if anyone could set up a web-site.

### Hot Tip:

You can't market the club to everyone at the same time and using the same format. Identify your main target and work from there.

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## When?

When you advertise is just as important as how and where. You need to try and keep your club in peoples minds. The closed season is just as important as the run up to pre-season and the start of the new. Try to make sure you give people enough notice of events. About four weeks is a good indication. Longer than that and people will forget, less than that may not be enough notice. You could also try to stagger the marketing, doing small groups at a time. Whenever you chose to undertake your marketing, bear in mind your marketing will only be as effective as the product you are selling!

## Step by step

So how do we pull this all together? The easiest way is to follow the clubwise step by step guide.

### Step 1:

Identify your marketing aim.

### Step 2:

Clearly identify what it is you are trying to sell.

### Step 3:

Identify who in your club is responsible for what aspect of the marketing?

### Step 4:

Identify the group of people you are trying to target.

### Step 5:

Establish the best way to reach your target group.

### Step 6:

Decide on which tools to use.

### Step 7:

Relay the benefits of what you are selling.

### Step 8:

Decide your timescales.

### Step 9:

Monitor the effect of your campaign.

### Step 10:

Put it down on paper!

A Marketing Action plan is a good idea when undertaking a marketing campaign. This enables the committee to clearly see what is going on and who is responsible for what. If this is all agreed and all parties who are involved have a copy, it is more likely the campaign will be successful. It doesn't have to be complex or extensive. Below is an example, based on our step-by-step guide.

## Tayside Hockey Club Marketing Action Plan August 2002

Step	Purpose	Action
1	Aim	To get more children into the youth section
2	Product	Hockey Coaching 4pm - 5 pm every Monday Lynch Sports Centre, Only 50p each night U14 Boys and Girls.
3	Responsibility	John to produce material Sally to design posters Bob to distribute to identified locations
4	Target Group	Secondary 1 and 2 pupils
5	Location	PE Departments, Sports Centres, Bring a Friend Campaign.
6	Tools	Posters, Flyers, Existing Members
7	Incentive	Make new Friends Have Fun Keep Fit
8	Timescales	Immediately after the school holidays.
9	Monitoring	10 new members as a direct result.

### Hot Tip:

Find out what skills and interests your club members have and align these to help with marketing tasks. For example there may be someone with expertise on computers who would be able to design a club web-site.