# MARKETING

# OVERVIEW

Marketing is a keyway to build knowledge of, and engagement with, your sporting club. Marketing can be defined as the action of promoting and selling products or services. In the context of your sporting club, marketing can be done in several ways to attract new coaches, volunteers and participants.

Marketing is about communicating your club’s activities and facilities to attract members, funds and other resources. Marketing is an important aspect of running your club. It tells people what you do, and who you are, and can be as simple as placing an ad in the local newspaper or as complex as repositioning your club in the marketplace. Some of the most common marketing mechanisms are:

* *Print Media*

Print media is a form of mass communication. Such things as printed publications, such as newspapers and magazines, as well as brochures and flyers could be deemed print media.

* *Paid Advertising*

Paid advertising is any kind of advertising that you pay for, versus owned or earned advertising. With paid advertising, sporting clubs pay the owner of ad space in exchange for use of that space.

* *Digital and Social Media*

Social and digital media marketing is the use of social media platforms and websites to promote your sporting club. Examples of social or digital media marketing tools include; Facebook, Instagram, WordPress (Website Host), TikTok etc.

* *Cross-promotion and partnerships*

Cross-promotion is a form of marketing promotion where sporting services are targeted with promotion of a related service (such as a sporting club). Marketing partnerships are when two or more organisations team-up to promote a like service.

**MARKETING CONCEPTS**

To utilise marketing effectively, it’s important to understand come marketing concepts. The below concepts have been informed by the *NSW Office of Sport*, which can be accessed here: <https://sport.nsw.gov.au/clubs/ryc/marketing>

*Target Marketing*

Target marketing is an efficient, cost-effective activity that focuses on groups of people who are most likely to become a member. Unlike mass marketing, target marketing doesn’t assume everyone is alike or wants the same thing. Target markets are made up of groups of people with common characteristics, such as address, age group, sex, occupation, education and interests. By continuing to refine your target market using specific or multiple characteristics, you can further focus your marketing activities.

When selecting your target market, consider:

* Market research builds a profile of existing and potential members and market segment
* Club objectives and business strategies often set out target markets
* Your club constitution may define membership classes.

*Competitors and Marketing Position*

What sets your club apart from other clubs is your competitive advantage. It creates value for your club and is an important point of difference when targeting members, spectators and sponsors.

To help position your club, these questions can help:

* How does your club compare to other organisations?
* What makes your club different from other clubs?
* What are parents looking for in an activity?
* What do participants want in an event?
* What would a potential sponsor look for?
* Does your sport have the right image to recruit new members?

*The 5 Ps of Marketing*

Identifying your target market, what your club offers, and your market positioning are all factors that determine your club’s marketing mix. This mix is generally made up of a combination of elements known as the 5 Ps:

* Product: Your sport, the club, the competitions, stalls or other activities on offer.
* People: Customers or people using your service or products, including employees, volunteers and members
* Price: Including membership fees and structure, discounts and cost of member’s time.
* Promotion: Activity to make customers aware of your product, including advertising, publicity, sponsorship, brochures, posters or cold calling.
* Place: Where your product is and includes where you train, compete (home and away) and other facilities on offer

**BENEFITS OF MARKETING**

Effective and well-planned marketing of your sports club can have several benefits. These include:

* Increase sales and drive membership,
* Enhance image and reputation,
* Create value for money,
* Create new markets, sponsorship opportunities and long-term alliances,
* Raise awareness and credibility in the community.

# BRANDING

Whilst this module doesn’t cover the full scope of all marketing mechanisms, it is important to briefly cover the concept of branding. Branding is a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies a sporting club’s goods or services as distinct from those of other sporting clubs. Tips for creating your club brand – so you can successfully and consistently market your sport – are listed below.

* Know your club’s values? Your club’s values or ‘personality’ are the things that will attract people (or put them off) joining your club. A sports club could include values such as fun, inclusive, driven etc. These values need to be expressed in everything your club does, from writing letters to how a coach interacts with his/her team.
* Understand what are your clubs unique selling points (or what your club does better or differently to others)? Ask questions like; what the club do well, what is the club known for etc.
* Identify what sort of people do you want joining your club? Think about the people who live in your local area. Is there many a certain age group or are there are lot of young families? Do you want to increase the number of junior or senior teams?
* Be clear about what key message do you want to include in your promotional material? What is the one thing you want to get across to the public? What aspect of your club do you feel is particularly strong?
* Make sure your membership fees are realistic and competitive – and if not, be clear why (what more do people joining your club get for paying more)? Can people realistically afford your membership? Is this proving a barrier for some people joining your club? Are you competitive with clubs who offer a similar service?
* Understand what you want to achieve from marketing. Outline the specific goals that you want to achieve from marketing.
* Be consistent with your club’s look and feel. If your club colours are blue and red, don’t use the colour green in a flyer.

# MARKETING PLANS

A marketing plan sets out your club’s marketing strategy and activities. It links with your club’s business plan, which sets the overall direction for your organisation. There are two types of marketing plans:

* Strategic: A three to five-year plan based on your business plan and used to develop ongoing programs and approach sponsors for large investments or commitments longer than one season or event
* Tactical: An offshoot of your strategic marketing plan and based on short term action plans, like ways to increase the number of club members this season

Ideally, each club has both a strategic (long-term) marketing plan, as well as a year-on-year tactical marketing plan. This enables your sporting club to have a clear direction of where you need to go, whilst also be flexible and adaptive to the changing needs of your members, sponsors, volunteers, coaches and the broader sporting community.

Before you write a marketing plan, make sure you have done the below actions:

* Ensure you are listed in local directories including online
* Make sure you have clear and relatable club values
* Know your club’s unique selling points
* Identify who you want to join your club (your target demographic)
* Identify the barriers to people joining your club
* Be clear about the message you want to market

# MARKETING PLAN

This marketing plan template has been informed by the Club Help Marketing Template, which can be found here: <https://www.clubhelp.org.au/club-resources>

**Introduction/Purpose**

A brief introduction to the plan with a statement about why the plan is being undertaken; “the purpose of this marketing plan is to identify opportunities to promote the club and ensure future sustainability”.

**Mission statement\***

A mission statement is a short statement detailing the purpose of a club/organisation. This should be informed from the strategic plan, if you have one. If not, ask: “for what purpose does the club exist and what does it provide to its members?”

**Vision statement\***

A vision statement captures the long-term picture of what the club/organisation wants to become. This should be informed from the strategic plan if you have one. If not, ask “what does the club aspire to be?”

**Marketing Objectives/Goals\***

A marketing objective/goal is a general statement about what the club/organisation is trying to achieve through its marketing. This should be informed from the strategic plan if you have one. If not, ask “What image is the club trying to convey?”

\*It is important to consider and refer to your mission and vision statements and goals/objectives as you go to ensure your marketing efforts are in line with your strategic direction.

**SWOT Analysis**

A SWOT Analysis is an opportunity for the club to review its key performance areas and ask questions about what the club is doing well and what it can improve on. Key performance areas (KPA) may include image/reputation, communication, coaching, on-field performance, branding and social activities.

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| **Key Performance Area: Club Reputation and Image** | |
| *Strengths* - What is the club good at?   * Strong identification of club logo in community | *Weaknesses* – What can the club do better?   * Low involvement of players in club activities |
| *Opportunities* – What can the club take advantage of?   * Volunteer opportunities in the community | *Threats* – What could potentially have an impact on the club?   * Poor off-field player behaviour |

**Recommendations**

Recommendations are the suggested ways to achieving your marketing goals with the intention of making your club more effective and efficient. Using information gathered from your SWOT analysis, identify ways for you club to improve its marketing efforts. Think of as many ideas as you can, and then pick out the most important ones for the next 12 months.

* *Example:* The club will commit to supporting two community events per year in a volunteer capacity through player involvement.

**Action Plan**

The action plan brings all your marketing efforts together with your club’s strategic direction. It will guide what actions will need to take place, who will be responsible for completing the tasks and what resources will be required. This is the working document for the committee to guide its future marketing efforts. The template can be found on the next page.

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| **MARKETING PLAN** | | | | | | | |
| **Key Performance Area** | **Objective/Goal** | **Recommendation** | **Actions** | **Responsibility**  Who will oversee/do it? | **Timeline**  When will it be done by? | **Resources**  What is required to do it? E.g. cost | **Status**  Date completed |
| Club Reputation and Image | The club to be a committed community club | The club will commit to supporting two community events per year in a volunteer capacity | Determine which events to be involved at and at what capacity  Organise club members to be involved | Secretary  President |  | Uniforms |  |
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# FREE MARKETING IDEAS

Marketing doesn’t have to cost your sporting club. There are several free and innovative ways to successfully promote your club to attract new members and/or volunteers. Some suggestions are:

* Consider how you can leverage word-of-mouth to promote your club; use meetings, newsletters and email lists to get your members talking
* Establish club social media pages such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter (review the Digital and Social Media section in this module)
* Build an email tree using your own lists and ask recipients to forward to others who might be interested
* Publish announcements and information on your club in community media sources and/or local social media groups
* Use community noticeboards to paste fliers and posters. Shop windows can also be a useful point of exposure e.g. Members all take two fliers and commit to placing them
* Include information in local school newsletters. e.g. a local soccer club promoting through their local school newsletter and requesting the school office to be a place families could register their interest
* Local politicians also have communication channels with their electorate. If you can get them on board, there may be opportunities to tap into their communication channels
* Assign Junior Ambassadors to speak at their school assembly etc. If you have any well-known members, request they become Ambassadors and sell the club whenever they can
* Submit media releases to local news outlets – it’s a great form of free advertising

# RESOURCES

Are you a bit lost? Unsure of where to start? Below are some free resources that sporting clubs can use to develop their marketing plans.

**GETTING STARTED**

* [The Clearinghouse for Sport](https://secure.ausport.gov.au/clearinghouse)connects people in sport to a world of ideas, experiences and knowledge including marketing, media.
* The [Australian Bureau of Statistics](http://www.abs.gov.au/)has a range of publications that can provide more information about potential markets and members.
* For direct marketing tools and tips, including database templates, media contacts, research, image generators and more, head to [Our Community.](https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/)
* For practical ideas to successfully market and promote your club, [Club Help](http://www.clubhelp.org.au/marketing) can help.