Communication and Funding

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# Effective Communication

The area of communications, marketing, promotions, sponsorship, and media is vitally important to the success of a club, its member servicing and the event’s clubs run. It is often overlooked in today’s ever evolving social media society.

Effective marketing and communication can attract members, sponsors, volunteers, and funders. The more people know about your club, the more opportunities that might come your club’s way. Marketing and communication initiatives are also a good way to promote (and thank) your sponsors, funders, and other community partners.

Effective marketing and communication mean both doing more with less, but also ensuring your messages are being seen and heard by the appropriate audiences.

Promoting your club can include events, activities, and advertising, however proactively sharing stories of success and highlights can be just as effective. The club should also ensure information is made available for people wanting to get involved as participants, coaches, officials, volunteers, or supporters.

There are several ways to deliver these messages, including club networks and meetings, noticeboards, newsletters, emails, SMS, media releases, local and community newspaper and radio, school newsletters, web posts, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, other community forums and event calendars etc.

The key is for communication to be regular, in order to retain interaction with your members and stakeholders, but also ensure your community is aware of your club and activities. The simple task of ensuring the club’s contact details are listed in the phone book and local directories is also important but can often be overlooked.

Another important consideration is for the club to meet the needs of their members, by understanding WHAT people want to know about, and the WHEN and HOW they want to receive that information. This is particularly important when needing to deliver messages to members about events, competitions, facilities or club announcements.

## Member communication

E-Newsletter service providers such as [Campaign Monitor](http://www.campaignmonitor.com/) or [Mail Chimp](http://mailchimp.com/?pid=GAW&source=website&gclid=CKn81cmJn7kCFehepgodFTkACA) provide an easy to use avenue for member communication.

* For up to 2000 subscribers, it is a free service, allowing you to send up to 12,000 emails per month
* It provides editable templates, in which the header can be changed so a graphic (such as your club banner) can be added to maintain a familiar look
* Allows you to design a subscriber button which can be placed on your website and on Facebook
* Provides reports on recipients of your emails, allowing you to keep an up-to-date database
* Track click-throughs and report back to sponsors.

### Email Marketing Plan

An email marketing plan can be put together in five simple steps:

* Define your readers
* Determine your purpose
* Outline your goals
* Determine your frequency
* Create a timeline

Mailchimp’s email marketing e-book can be found [HERE](http://mailchimp.com/resources/guides/how-to-create-an-email-marketing-plan/)

### Common Email Marketing Mistakes

Common email-marketing mistakes include:

* Not having permission to email your recipients
* Confusing transactional emails with email marketing
* Assuming people remember who you are
* Writing like a used-car salesman
* Ignoring campaign reports
* Sending with personal reply-to address

Mailchimp’s marketing mistakes e-book can be found [HERE](http://mailchimp.com/resources/guides/common-rookie-mistakes/)

### A Guide for non-profit organisations

Mailchimp provides information to assist not for profit’s:

* Creating a list
* Creating groups
* Sending your first campaign
* Sharing your newsletter
* Reports and analytics
* Integrations

Mailchimp’s e-book for not-for-profit organisations can be found [HERE](http://mailchimp.com/resources/guides/mailchimp-for-nonprofits/)

## Online media

### Club website tips

Traditionally communication with members has been via hard copy materials, application forms, event information, newsletters, renewal reminders etc. Producing and distributing this information can be costly, time consuming and the material is at risk of becoming out of date quickly. Moving this sort of communication to online can cut costs as well as allow you to keep your members up to date with the most recent information. Web based communication provides a highly accessible marketing option.

A few things to remember when updating your website:

1. Update your website at least once a month
2. Make sure all your departments are using the one web site to communicate
3. Have a place on the home page for important announcements and upcoming events so that the visitor can immediately see what’s new
4. Create a subscription-based email newsletter to promote updates on your website. Always link the newsletter to your website to direct subscribers there.

Suggestions on marketing your website can be found at [Coyote Communications Free Tips](http://www.coyotecommunications.com/webdevo/webmrkt.shtml).

### Social Media

Social media gives individuals, groups, organisations, and businesses the opportunity to share and connect like never before. Social media sites have become virtual communities which allow for the instant exchange of information, whether it is written or visual. If used responsibly social media can be a great way for clubs to increase member satisfaction through greater engagement, issue important notices, promote events and service sponsors.

EA Social Media Policy can be found [here.](http://equestrian.org.au/site/equestrian/national/downloads/2005/Governance/efa_policies/Equestrian%20Australia%20Social%20Media%20Policy%20FINAL.pdf)

### Social media sites that your club might consider using:

* Facebook – the world’s largest social network – connect with fans and share information
* Twitter – an information network made up of 140-character messages from all over the world
* You Tube – video sharing service, upload, and host videos which you can share on Facebook and Twitter
* Flickr – photo sharing service, create virtual photo albums which you can share on Facebook and Twitter
* Instagram – Upload images to your account and instantly share from your mobile device

### Ways in which social media can benefit clubs

* Use Twitter to quickly advise members of a last-minute change of venue or cancellation due to rain
* Let committee members know via Facebook when and where the next meeting will be held through the event feature. You can see who is attending through the RSVP option.
* Get on Twitter and report live from events, especially to fans, members and sponsors who can't be there. Post videos of match highlights on YouTube for everyone to see (with permissions of course) and then share the link to the video on Facebook and Twitter
* Market club/event merchandise online via Facebook
* Use a photo sharing application like Flickr to post a selection of good quality club photos and share the link to the album on Facebook and Twitter
* Recognise your sponsors
* Put a call out for volunteers at upcoming club days
* Let fans know when entries to an event are opening or closing
* Use Facebook to start a discussion about a particular topic or issue at the club
* Ask a question – use this Facebook feature to find out what your members might think of a particular initiative you’re thinking of implementing – ask for their input and you’ll make them feel included.

*Remember, social media offers two-way communication. Be prepared for positive and negative feedback and use it to improve your club.*

### Social Media Do’s and Don’ts

Do…

* Use image or video-based content whenever possible – visual content is more likely to be shared
* Provide content that people will want to share – you want your messages to be spread as widely as possible and having your fans share your club’s posts will help to increase your fan base
* Champion others – share your members’ posts, like and comment on their news feeds and they’ll return the favour
* Follow other clubs and events, and retweet their posts – they’ll do the same for you
* Add social media links to your website
* Tailor your posts to the channel you’re using – it’s ok to repeatedly tweet but you only want to keep your Facebook posts to a minimum
* Follow the most popular pages (Facebook) and tweeters to see what they do well and then copy them
* Have a dedicated social media volunteer – a university student or someone wanting to gain experience in this area would be a great choice
* Tags your friends in photos and videos in which they appear
* Use #hashtags on twitter to categorise your tweets. As an administrator this will make it easy for you to search and retweet mentions related to your club
* Cross promote your social media channels across all your platforms
* Personalise your social media pages – make them unique, easily identifiable and interesting to view
* Create a Facebook *page* rather than a *profile* – Pages allow anyone to like your account, an unlimited number of fans and page insights such as reach and audience figures (which can be useful when reporting back to sponsors). Profile accounts allow for greater privacy which is good for personal accounts but can be restrictive to clubs who want to grow their fan base and access audience data.

Don’t…

* Tweet, post or share in the first person – always take on the club’s persona
* Neglect your accounts – the only way to build an online presence is with regular posts
* Over post on Facebook – too many posts from the one group can be bothersome on Facebook. Spread out your Facebook posts and keep information such as score updates for Twitter
* Be offensive
* Make spelling and grammatical mistakes
* Reveal too much information – remember this is not a personal account
* Fail to acknowledge people when they respond to a post or ask a question
* Target children under the age of 13 – Facebook restricts the use of its network to those under this age

# Fundraising and Grants

## What is Fundraising?

Fundraising is a systematic process designed to secure additional funds to the club’s operating budget.

Ideally, there should be a separation between the operating budget and funds required for project/capital/events expenditures. In most circumstances fundraising should not be used for operational expenditure. It is also critical that fundraising plans are linked to the overall goals and strategies of the club.

A key consideration in fundraising is the efficiency of the process. It is important to recognise that fundraising involves costs to the club. Sport and recreation organisations need to ensure that the real cost of raising additional revenue does not outweigh the amount of funds raised. One of the most critical costs is labour. It should always be remembered that most people join the club to participate in the activity, not become full-time fundraisers. It is important not to over-rely on a small group of volunteers for fundraising. Ideally, the workload should be evenly dispersed.

Sport and recreation organisations can generate funds from four main sources:

* Internally
* Grants from government
* Sponsorship from business
* Donations from trusts, foundations, businesses, or individuals

It is essential that your club carefully considers each of these sources and develops fundraising strategies aimed at achieving maximum benefits from each (where appropriate to the organisation). There are established fundraising principles that you should follow to help in this process. The organisation should:

* Determine why the funds are required - there must be a clearly defined purpose that drives the rest of the process
* Set objectives – these should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound) objectives which detail what needs to be done and by when
* Assess the resources available (people, equipment, facilities, money, commitment) and develop a budget – this establishes the limits that the organisation can go to secure more assistance and helps identify the real costs to the organisation
* Develop strategies – these detail how the required funds will be raised
* Establish priorities, implement, and monitor strategies
* Past success – Review past fundraising activities. If it has been successful before then there’s probably no reason to change the activity
* Enthusiasm counts – Discuss what you would all enjoy selling or participating in. If you’re all enthusiastic about something, you’ll be more motivated to sell and get people involved.

## Fundraising Alternatives

When discussing fundraising activities, many people will tend to think about the usual tried (but not always true) traditional approaches. These normally include such things as raffles and fundraising events. However, there are several alternatives to these traditional approaches that clubs may wish to consider as part of an overall strategy:

* Creative management of the organisation including sharing some costs. By sharing or pooling costs, the organisation may reduce its need for additional funds. Examples of this approach include bulk purchasing large items and sharing multipurpose facilities with other organisations.
* Some clubs may also consider accessing additional funds through commercial borrowing. Borrowing usually means that the project or facility can be introduced earlier than if ‘normal’ fundraising activities were conducted and this also means that additional revenue streams may be accessed earlier. However, clubs should: be careful not to over commit; match the term of the loan to the life of the facility; be realistic in cost and revenue projections; and consider staging large projects to spread the risk. Furthermore, it is inadvisable for individuals to take out loans on behalf of or to act as guarantor for the organisation, or loan money to the organisation.

More fundraising ideas can be found on [NSW Sport and Recreation Website](http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/sportsclubs/ryc_fund_ideas.asp)

## Grants

Grants are funds received from statutory, voluntary, or philanthropic agencies that have often been established with grant giving as one of their primary purposes. Grants are usually given by such agencies in order to pursue their own objectives and strategies (eg government policy, community development, meeting the needs of youth).

Therefore, the chance of obtaining a grant often depends on how a sport and recreation organisation’s project fits into the overall philosophy and specific criteria and conditions established by the grant agency.

In most cases, demand for grant monies exceeds supply, so it is advisable to hold discussions with a representative of the grant agency so that the agency’s priorities and conditions are known and understood prior to applying.

## Sources of Grants

Several different grant sources are relevant to sport and recreation organisations. The most common grant agencies include government, charitable trusts and foundations, and corporate foundations. Grants often change each year in response to the current environment. Clubs should be aware of grants that are available and make applications based on their need.

### Equestrian Australia/ Equestrian NSW

Grants generally occur annually and vary based on the focus of the organisation.

### Government

Sport and recreation related projects can be funded at the local, state and Commonwealth levels. Local government may help groups at club level while state government grants and subsidies are available for local and state sport and recreation organisations.

* The [Australian Sports Foundation](http://www.asf.org.au/) (ASF) is a non-profit organisation set up by the federal government to assist not-for-profit groups raise money for eligible sports projects. The ASF is listed in the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, which enables donations to be tax deductable under certain conditions.
* [Grants and Funding | Sport Australia](https://www.sportaus.gov.au/grants_and_funding) Opportunities for individuals and sporting organisations to receive funding through Sport Australia.
* Additional government information can be found through the [Parliamentary Library](http://www.aph.gov.au/library/).
* [Our Community](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/) – strengthens 700,000 community, education and non-profit groups by providing funding advice, a free online donations portal, volunteers service and practical information.

There are a variety of areas in which sport and recreation organisations may receive assistance via government funded grants. They include:

* Administration support
* Employment of personnel
* Travel subsidies
* Organisational development
* Coaching development
* Staging of events
* Capital works
* New initiatives

Although government is a significant contributor of grants to sport and recreation organisations, there are also other sources.

### Charitable Trusts and Foundations

Most charitable trusts and foundations also provide financial assistance but only to those sport and recreation organisations that can offer the trust or foundation a tax deduction and which help disadvantaged groups (eg sporting organisations for people with a disability). Most local libraries are likely to contain directories of philanthropic trusts. Alternatively, the Australian Directory of Philanthropy is available from Philanthropy Australia Inc on (03) 9620 0200 or email pa@philanthropy.org.au or [www.philanthropy.org.au](http://www.philanthropy.org.au/). Checking in a directory should be the first step in determining whether there is a match between the interests of the sport and recreation organisation and the funding agency.

### Corporate foundations

Some corporations like BHP, AMP, Sony and Westfield have established foundations that provide grants for particular causes. These foundations cannot be used to promote the business interests of the specific corporation, nor can they seek sponsorship benefits like signage or naming rights. Benefits to the corporations are public recognition that in turn helps build their reputations in the community. Information about major companies is easily available through websites, business magazines, journals, and newspaper articles. Annual company reports also provide information about the nature and extent of a company’s involvement in this area of activity.

## Preparing Grant Applications

Whichever type of grant agency is targeted there is almost always require an application is almost always required to be submitted. From an overall perspective, grant applications usually must demonstrate that the project in question is feasible and meets the appropriate policy goals or priorities of the particular grant agency.

Preparing grant applications is an exacting and time-consuming process. However, a well-prepared and well-written application, that is clear about its objectives, budget, and processes, will help considerably in winning grants from government, trusts, and corporations.

Good grant applications take planning, time, and considerable effort. It is rare that applications put together in a last-minute panic are successful. Furthermore, expectations about the quality of presentation and the sophistication of grant applications have gradually increased.

After developing the project concept and identifying suitable granting agencies, the grant application should be initiated. Letters of enquiry should be written to each potential funding source (newspapers often carry advertisements for grant programs) requesting necessary materials to prepare the proposal. Try where at all possible to include all information requested in the application.

Although specific criteria may vary with each grant scheme, most grant applications require similar types of information:

1. Contact information
2. The program/project description
3. A brief description of the organisation applying
4. The program/project budget
5. The amount of assistance requested
6. All other sources of funding for the project
7. How the applicant organisation meets the grant criteria
8. A guarantee that the program will proceed and monies received will be spent on the purpose for which the money was given
9. Copies of the latest annual report and a copy of the audited financial statements.

After developing the grant application, it must then be ‘marketed’ to the appropriate bodies. Personal communication with the funding organisation may help with this process. Discussing the priorities of the granting agency, the types of projects previously funded, and asking how the sport and recreation organisation’s application can be improved, are all ways of getting the granting agency involved and increasing awareness about the intended project.

Organisations that are successful in attracting grants usually:

* Prepare a yearly calendar of closing dates for all funding sources
* Request application forms well before the closing date
* Prepare the application well in advance
* Pay careful attention to the details required and presentation quality
* Clearly outline the goals and objectives of the project
* Describe why the project is needed and support this with facts and figures
* Detail the methods used to conduct the project
* Indicate the expected outcomes of the project
* Consult advisory officers in relevant trusts and departments where appropriate
* Submit applications before the closing date.

# Sponsorship

## What do you want sponsorship for?

Decide what it is you want the sponsorship to achieve. Also decide what the best arrangement for your club is.

Which of the following do you want sponsorship to cover?

* Your entire event/activity
* Parts of the event and therefore the possibility of more than one sponsor
* Purchase of uniforms or equipment
* Hire of equipment/grounds/facilities
* Travel/accommodation costs
* Advertising/promotional costs
* Development programs.

Clearly define who your members are, the program or activities your club offers and the people you are trying to attract to the event.

This information is important to sponsors; it allows them to decide whether your members or the people you want attending your event are in the sponsors “target market”. When approaching sponsors it helps to develop information about members and people that attend your functions, what gender they are? What age? Are they family groups? Where do they live?

## Who are likely sponsors?

All sorts of companies are prepared to provide sponsorship; you just must show them how they will get value for money.

Discuss potential sponsors with other people in your club/group. The information you have collected on your members and those who attend your functions will be a big help. Think about which companies or organisations would like to advertise or promote their products and services to these people.

Gather information from media services. If an event is being advertised on TV, who are its sponsors? Local newspapers may list events sponsored by companies that want to deal with the people in your suburb.

Don’t overlook the possibility that small companies may be interested. Too often we think only to ask the big corporations who get regular approaches for sponsorship.

If one smaller company is unlikely to be able to afford your package, consider the possibility of breaking the package into smaller lots and offering them to several smaller companies.

If most of your members live in one area, you have a reasonable chance of picking up a local sponsor – they might be literally on your doorstep.

There are no limits when it comes to sponsorship, you just must remember to make your sponsorship proposal relevant to each company. Companies don’t like to think that they are just one in a hundred companies being approached on a ‘mass’ basis - tailor your proposal to them. Demonstrate that their objectives align with yours.

Once you have a list of potential sponsors, do a little research on them. Does the company have policies about sponsorships, e.g., do they only sponsor state-level riders? Perhaps they don’t go for cash sponsorships, preferring to supply equipment. If possible, find out when the company prepares its annual budget so your proposal can be considered for the coming year.

## What are sponsors looking for?

Sponsors are looking for people who are potentially in the market for their products and services. Sponsors are looking for opportunity; remember that you might offer them an opportunity they never thought of (that’s why they haven’t called yet).

Sponsors will be looking to see that sponsoring your organisation will be more effective than spending money on some other form of promotion or advertising. Sponsors want to be associated with success. They are also looking for a professional performance from you.

## What can we offer?

The following is a list of the types of ideas that could be included in a sponsorship proposal (it’s a big list and you normally wouldn’t include them all). Once again, don’t restrict yourself to this list if you can think of other ideas.

Consider offering:

* Area and perimeter advertising space
* Promotion in your member or event newsletter – either online or printed
* Promotion on your social media pages
* Website integration with logos, advertising, maybe a story provided by the sponsor
* Signage and banners
* Invitations to events
* Free tickets or free admissions to events
* Opportunity to host associated lunches, dinners etc
* Placement on official guest lists
* Opening functions
* Presentation of awards
* Name and logo on program; invitations; other printed posters; flyers; newsletters; e-newsletters; and website
* Name and logo on media release letterheads and media packages
* Name and logo on newspaper and/or television advertisements
* Name mentioned on community service radio announcements and/or radio advertisements
* Clothing opportunities e.g., caps, shirts or shorts
* Name and logo on awards and trophies
* Possible introduction to other organisations/people that potentially might buy their product/service
* Naming rights to event/s
* On-site displays and/or sales opportunities
* Opportunities for company staff involvement e.g., discount tickets.

Always remember that you should cost anything that you agree to supply sponsors. There’s no point in having sponsors that cost you as much or more than you can receive from them.

## Sponsorship Types

* Naming rights sponsorship
* Naming rights of a class
* Naming rights of an equestrian discipline, a particular event or division, or a team
* Naming rights of a day, weekend, at the event
* Naming rights of an award, trophy, or scholarship
* Supporting sponsorship
* Official product
* Preferred supplier

## Preparing your proposal

There is no single way to present a successful proposal and there is a lot to be said for an original approach. A starting point, however, might be along the following lines:

* Call the potential sponsor first and start building the relationship. Introduce yourself, your club/event and start finding out a bit about them. Ask for the best person to address the proposal and remember to include details from your phone call in your proposal – it shows them you were listening to what they were looking for.
* A covering letter thanking the potential sponsor for taking the time to look at your proposal. Make sure you address this letter to the manager/owner or marketing manager.
* A title page with important facts about your organisation’s event/program is next and might look something like this:
  + title of event/program
  + proposal to
  + sponsorship coordinator
  + name
  + address
  + telephone (H) and (W)
  + date/s of event/program
  + signed
  + date
* Provide details of the types of people you expect to attend your event, and the types of people who make up your event, as an opportunity to gain exposure for their goods and services. Some sponsors may look towards selling their goods and services at your event. Try to define what sort of sales they might make and include that in your sponsorship, offering them exclusive rights of sale.
* List exactly what it is you will provide to the sponsor and the value of each item (some you may know because it is a direct charge that you will have to pay, others such as signage, you may have to estimate). It is a good idea to match this against the sponsorship amount you are asking for.

A budget of this type is an excellent idea because it makes it clear to the sponsor that it is not a donation and reinforces in your mind that you have something to sell. Too many times we give up control of our event to a sponsor because we don’t outline what we will give them for their money.

Remember to value items not at what they will cost you on the day, but at what you might reasonably expect to pay if someone sold it to you. For example, if the ingredients for a ham and salad roll cost you $2.00 but you know that the shops usually charge $4.00, then charge $4.00.

The following is a sample of how a sponsorship budget might appear:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **$5,000 sponsorship** | |
| Naming rights to event | $2,000 |
| Advertisements in community newspaper featuring the sponsor’s name | $750 |
| 20 VIP tickets (includes entry, seating, breakfast and lunch) | $400 |
| Signage on arena | $1,000 |
| Logo on volunteer clothing | $450 |
| Trade stand space | $400 |
| **TOTAL VALUE** | **$5,000** |

Have a clear definition of what you are offering a sponsor. In the above example the word signage appears, leading to two possibilities:

* Space will be allocated for the sponsors to put up their own sign
* Space will be allocated and we will have a sign made and placed in the appropriate spot.

If you require the sponsors to supply their own sign, but the sponsor thinks that you are going to supply a sign, relationships can become strained. Worse still, your club could be out of pocket.

Once you have a proposal and a list of potential sponsors, talk to them.

## Selling Your Sponsorship

This is a critical phase in the sponsorship process. In this phase, your club makes its initial contact with potential sponsors and the nature of this contact establishes the climate for subsequent negotiations and relationships. Because first impressions count, it is important to ensure that this step is carried out professionally.

## Presenting a Sponsorship Proposal

Most sponsorship proposals require a verbal presentation (although not all, so the written proposal must also be able to ‘standalone’). This is a key component of the selling phase and is where organisations can encounter difficulties. Many clubs assume that because they have now finished the hard work, the proposal will sell itself, or because their program is so ‘worthwhile’ the sponsor will naturally support it. This is far from the case and the importance of the actual presentation should not be underestimated. Professionalism is vital so the organisation should carefully consider who should make the presentation. If there are members who have the necessary experience and skills, then perhaps it would be best if they presented the proposal rather than the president. Dress and appearance are also key considerations.

Other issues to consider in this phase include:

* Find out who to send the proposal to (i.e., the decision maker) and ensure that the name and address is correct. Make an appointment to present the proposal in person. Face-to-face communication greatly enhances the likelihood of success.
* Find out the company’s sponsorship criteria and history – what does the company want out of a sponsorship relationship?
* The proposal should be prepared to a professional standard (e.g., typed and well laid out).
* Information must be relevant, accurate and precise.
* Being well prepared when presenting the proposal is critical. The presenters should ensure that they have appropriate supplementary information to support the proposal and try to anticipate (and plan answers for) questions that may arise.
* Follow up after the meeting – thank them for the opportunity to present the proposal and then maintain contact.

## Handling rejection

Even rejection of the sponsorship proposal can be used as an opportunity. First, you should acknowledge the rejection and thank the potential sponsor for their consideration. Then a meeting should be arranged with that organisation’s contact to discuss:

* What caused the proposal to fail? (e.g., was the proposal written clearly enough?)
* In what ways could the proposal have been improved?
* Would the company consider a modified request?
* What actions could the organisation take to enhance its chances next time?
* Given the nature of the sponsorship request, does the contact know of any other corporations that would be more receptive? If so, would they agree to help in the initial contact?
* This information may facilitate a second chance initially and will at the very least keep the potential sponsor informed and involved, potentially increasing the likelihood of future sponsorship success.

## Servicing Your Sponsor

It is good business practice to have a formal agreement or contract in place and is a necessity for significant funding. Lack of a written contract increases the potential for misunderstandings and the relationship turning sour. A change of personnel can mean the intent of an agreement is lost unless the agreement is in writing.

If unsure, consult with a lawyer to ensure the agreement is sound.

Never assume you will get certain rights. Clearly state the rights agreed to or commitment in the contract.

Once the sponsorship contract has been signed, in some respects the hard work has just begun. You should try to develop and maintain a long-term relationship with the sponsor. Developing a committed and consistent supporter should be the aim as it is far more efficient to maintain a relationship with existing sponsors rather than continually seeking new sponsorship arrangements.

At the event things to consider:

* Make sure someone is available to meet with them, explain what is going on at the event, ensure they have their tickets, program, and know where they should be
* Give them a tour of the event – show them around, introduce them to key officials and riders, and give them a ‘behind the scenes’ special treatment that is only reserved for sponsors.
* Make sure the sponsor signage and other event deliveries are on display in prominent locations so the sponsor can see their investment in action
* Touch base with them throughout the day
* Involve them in presentations, perhaps give them a course walk/stable tour as well
* Acknowledge them in any official VIP functions
* Ensure they have somewhere they can sit to watch the event – whether that is a VIP marquee or simply a designated area for them.

## Maintaining the Sponsorship Relationship

The relationship that is established between your club and a sponsor should not be neglected after receiving the assistance. You should maintain your efforts to ensure a positive relationship with the sponsor, with ongoing communication being a key component. There are a variety of ways to keep your sponsors informed and involved:

* **Thank-you Letters.** All funding should be acknowledged with a personal thankyou letter that appreciates the support and reiterates the need, intended use and sponsorship terms, signed by the management committee chairperson or executive director.
* **Press Clippings.** Copies of articles appearing in the press publicising any aspect of the project and that make reference to the sponsor should be forwarded to that organisation. A letter that indicates the general content of the article should be included.
* **Regular Written Progress Reports.** Reports documenting the progress of your club, project, or team should be sent regularly to the sponsor (include photographs where appropriate).
* **Personal Visits and Invitations.** Representatives of the sponsor should be invited to participate in your ceremonies and events (e.g., facility openings) and the sponsor should be kept informed of all milestones.
* **Telephone Calls.** Committee members should be available to respond to calls from sponsors, and to initiate calls. It is important that you are responsive to questions that show continued interest.
* **Take An Interest in Your Sponsors.** Acknowledge their success even if they are unrelated to the sponsorship agreement.
* **Newsletters.** Sponsors should be placed on your club’s mailing list and be acknowledged in the newsletter where appropriate.
* **Recognition.** Sponsors like to be recognised for the contributions they make. Linking a corporate sponsor to well-publicised successes is highly prized by corporate marketing departments.
* **Request For Continuing Funds**. This is an important part of the sponsorship process. You should explicitly identify relevant progress and accomplishments and outline opportunities for continuance and expansion. The sponsor may decide to continue sponsoring the organisation in other areas. Always remember that sponsorship is a business deal, and the company wants to get value for its investment. You should continually look for further avenues to promote sponsors.

## After the event

You should provide your sponsors with a brief report, which would include information such as the following:

* Attendances with a breakdown of males, females, adults, and children. Consider (don’t overdo the workload though) the possibility of conducting questionnaires or interviews with attendees. This information can help to give a profile of the sort of people who attend your events.
* What were your successes?
* How can you improve in the future?
* How the sponsorship goals were met, include images showing examples (e.g. signage).
* Did your sponsorship get value for money?

# Media

## Publicity and Media

Publicity is free promotion for your sports club, most commonly obtained through the media. When done well, it can bring many benefits to your club. However, be aware that you have no control over what form the publicity takes. In dealing with all media have a clear idea of what message you wish to convey.

### How to get publicity

Get to know the local journalists who write the sports sections for the free newspapers or report for the radio stations. Find out what they’re interested in covering and how you can give them the information. Check their deadlines and requirements.

### Attract attention

The media is more likely to publish or broadcast news or human-interest stories that will appeal to their audience. Check the local papers and listen to the radio to find out what types of articles interest the editors, readers, and listeners. Work out ways to make your information more interesting. Find an angle that will attract attention. Examples are: three sets of twins competing at the same event, a celebrity is opening your fundraiser or a member of your club has achieved a significant result against the odds.

All media have different needs, styles, deadlines and only they know what will appeal to target audiences. There is no guarantee that your activity will secure media coverage, but you can maximise your chances by:

* Researching a range of sports and lifestyle media, getting an idea of what makes a good story, and what the angles are
* Asking yourself what is newsworthy about your event or activity before contacting the media
* Getting to know the media personally if you can; phone in advance and sound them out regarding stories and angles
* Checking their deadlines and working in with them. Find out any other requirements – do they require photographs, or will they send a photographer?
* Remembering that the media are in the business of entertaining and informing, not providing free publicity for your club
* Treating the media as your club’s VIP’s. Invite them to special events or openings and provide for their special needs with background and information, tickets, interview room and access to phones etc.

### Who are your local media outlets?

1. Weekly newspapers and/or
2. Regional radio and TV stations and/or
3. Community newsletters and/or
4. Websites or blogs promoting events and activities in your community

### How to approach local media

Media outlets are really supportive of local sporting organisations, but you need to provide them with time to prepare. Contact them by phone first to tell them about your event and then send them a media release.

For newspapers, ask to speak to the editor. If you’re calling the local television station, ask to speak to the chief-of-staff and for radio, you need to ask for the producer of the specific show you’re after.

For websites and blogs, simply send the owner or author an email with the information you would like them to publish.

### Tips when communicating with the media:

Keep your chat short and snappy, limiting conversation to the exciting event you have planned. At the conclusion of the conversation ask for their email address and confirm your conversation with them in an email.

When explaining your project to the media, assume that the person you are speaking to knows nothing about it, use simple language and avoid technical terminology.

The media will want lots of colour and activity so make sure that you have a planned activity in mind before promoting it.

### A note on images

Don’t despair if the local newspaper is not able to cover your story beforehand. They may prefer to run the story once the program has started because then they can use images from the event. Providing local newspapers with great photo opportunities or sending them a good quality image can greatly increase your chances of securing a story. Make sure you provide high-resolution photos (at least 1MB in size) and remember to provide the newspaper with the full name of everyone in your photos, along with your contact details should they wish to obtain a comment from you. You should also ensure that permission is sought from the parent/guardian of each child which appears in the image by having them complete a photo release form.

## Guidelines when young people are involved

**1. Permission:** Ensure children involved in any activity with local media have permission to be filmed or appear in photographs. Make sure the photo release form is competed for each child who is going to appear in the photograph or on the television

**2. Dress to impress:** Children who are going to take part in any promotions should wear their helmet and should be dressed suitably for the activity they are performing. The coach or member who is interviewed should also wear suitable attire. Ensure your member or coach is wearing your club uniform (if applicable).

**3. Ready, set, go:** Local news crews and photographers cover multiple stories each day, so their time is limited. The easier you make the experience for them, the more likely it is your club will end up in the paper or on the nightly news. Make sure you select and brief your spokespeople and members before the event, so they are prepared for possible interviews and photo shoots on the day.

# Event Promotion

Promotion of your club’s activities and services can take many forms. Promoting your club is not just about an advertising campaign and it’s not just about using the media, although both approaches can help you. Promotion is a way of creating a positive image for the public and greater member awareness of your club and its activities.

## Developing a Marketing Plan

The Marketing plan is simply a written document outlining:

1. What you need to do to make your club successful (identifying goals and objectives)?
2. How you intend going about it (developing strategies and tactics)?
3. Who is going to do it (allocating roles and responsibilities)?
4. By when (deadlines)

Remember a good plan is always flexible. It should also include budgets and a summary of costs of each activity and possible sources of funding, such as sponsorship, fundraising or government or other funding.

## Key Steps in Developing your Plan

* Defining who you are
* Defining your product/service
* Identifying your target groups
* Setting goals and objectives
* Develop the strategy

## Critical Success Factors of Successful Promotions

1. Use the best medium for your target group and the event, such as direct mail, radio, banners, advertising, posters, or speeches
2. Include all the necessary information (who, what, when, where, why) and make the communication as exciting, attractive, and easy to read or assimilate as possible
3. Use the right language and tone, with words people can understand, and a call to action that will make them want to participate. Tell them why they won’t want to miss your event. In other words, what’s in it for them.

## Market Research: Learn about your Members

Market research should form the basis of all marketing activities. It helps you to get to know who your members are, and why a person would want to become a member or attend an event. It also helps you understand the environment you’re operating in and about your competitors.

### Existing information - Where to look?

* Membership database
* Registration figures
* Geographic area
* Australian Bureau of Statistics

### New research – Ideas for your club

* Interview existing members
  + Why did they join?
* Interview lapsed members
  + Why didn’t they renew?
* Research other clubs
  + Do they have different members to you?
* Interview potential members
  + What would get them to join?

### Target Market

Market research helps define your target market. Target marketing focuses your marketing activities on groups of people most likely to become a member. You are looking to define who are your current target markets to help make your marketing strategies more effective. You also want to look at marketing to potential new target markets, to grow your membership in the future.

### Competitors

Here are some questions to help position your club in the market:

* How does your club compare with other organisations?
* What makes your club different to 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?

### Marketing Mix (the 5 P’s)

1. Product – Having or producing a product or service required by others
2. People – Customers or the people who use the services or products on offer
3. Price – Pricing the product or service at market price
4. Promotion – Ensuring the potential customers are aware of your product
5. Place – Where the product is bought.

### Marketing Ideas

* Websites
* Newsletters
* Signage
* Club Logo
* Flyers and Brochures
* Merchandise and Uniforms

### Direct Marketing

Direct marketing allows you to communicate straight to your members or potential members. Whether you’re promoting an event or maintaining strong relationships with your existing members, direct marketing is a great way to make a more personal approach. This can come in the form of SMS, email, mail, letter box drops or social media invitation.

Start by building and maintaining a database. This will enable you to personalise your member communication to let members know of new committee members, new equipment, events, and other important updates. You could also target ‘lapsed’ or infrequent members to encourage them to return.