



## How to grow membership

### Recruitment and retention of members

All clubs need to have a strong membership base which will be made up of a range of individuals and families. A majority of the members will be participants but they will also include parents, individuals who are interested in the social aspects of the club, 'Country members' who have moved away but who still have an interest in the club and general supporters of the club. The membership income is one of the main income streams for the club and therefore it is important that the club focusses on it and actively attempts to grow the income.

The club will need to understand a) who the potential members are b) what their individual 'wants and needs' are and c) actively communicate with the potential members.

Key points to remember are:

- For each category, ensure that benefits are included that are wanted by the specific group being targeted. If you don't know what each category wants then carry out some research to find out.
- Use the website, social media, word of mouth and e-mail to sell the memberships, telling target groups what they get and why they should consider buying a membership.
- Actively sell memberships and collect data from all members.
- Create strong partnerships with local schools via the Active Schools network.
- Engage members in the direction of travel and major decisions. The more engaged members are in their club the more likely they are to stay and also recruit others. Involve them in the management and development of their club.
- Ensure members get what they are promised. It costs more to find a new member than it does to keep one.

#### The Target Group - examples

##### Participants

What you offer this target group will vary and therefore it is important that the club recognises the different types of 'customer'. The performance rugby player will want to have good coaches, good facilities, a competitive team and possibly an income. The social rugby player will also require good coaching and facilities but will also want to have fun and a good social life through the club. Others may simply want the club to be welcoming to families.



### **Parents**

The parents may simply take out a Junior Membership for their child/children if you don't tell them about the benefits of being family members. These benefits could include discounts at events, access to certain social events, newsletters, fitness classes for parents etc.

### **Social Members**

You will need to understand why a non-participant should join the club. What's in it for them if they do? The package needs to be developed and promoted.

### **Associate Members**

Within every community there are sports groups and societies that don't have a base/club house. Examples could be cycling, athletics, triathlon, history society etc. Clubs very often create an associate membership package for these individuals. The benefits are obviously financial, visibility for the club in the community and promotion of the club's facilities.

### **Country Members**

All clubs have individuals and families who have moved away but who would still like to be linked to the club. The Country Membership should be cheap but offer benefits such as newsletters, discounts on club merchandise etc.