



Scottish Rugby Marketing Guide for clubs

First things first, what is marketing? Here is a very basic definition:

'The action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising.'

In principle this makes sense but what does it actually mean? Not a lot really, unless you have a good understanding of **WHAT** you are trying to promote and **WHO** this is aimed at!

When it comes to marketing a rugby club it must be emphasised that there is no one size fits all – Every club is different in terms of: size, opportunities, assets and audience therefore the communications strategy should reflect this.

This document was not created for the purpose of telling clubs what to do, instead it provides some parameters that clubs may wish to follow to help convey a clear and consistent message to those they are communicating with.

When it comes to forming your marketing strategy we propose 4 steps that can be followed:

WHAT – WHO – HOW – REVIEW

Giving careful consideration to these four steps should help with the accuracy and impact of your marketing communications!

WHAT

This may sound obvious but at the centre of any campaign should be a clear understanding of what is on offer, as this will have an inevitable impact on the following steps!

Within your rugby club you will undoubtedly have a number of different assets/opportunities that you wish to promote to the local audience, these may include:

- Playing Opportunities
- Coaching / Volunteer Opportunities
- Programme or Pitchside Advertising
- Player Sponsorship
- Use of the club for private functions



- Club BBQ
- Fundraising/Charity event

Of course, there will be many more, but what is important here is to understand which particular offering is the focus of your communications and stick to this. In marketing terms this is known as ‘clearly defining your product/service.’

To give some context – a campaign aimed at boosting player numbers will have a completely different look and feel to one aimed at selling advertising space in the match day programme.

Once you are settled on your offering the next thing to think about are the **BENEFITS!**

You know **what** you want to talk about, now you need to establish the benefits associated with this. You need to explain to your target audience exactly why this is something they should be involved with.

Using the programme advertising opportunity again here is a list of potential benefits you may wish to talk about:

- Exposure to your audience (which is likely to be diverse)
- Alignment to your club (and its values)
- Exposure to the audience of visiting clubs
- Being a part of a vibrant social institution within the local community
- Being a part of your match day experience (when the club is at its busiest)

This is just an example, but a simple exercise of listing these benefits should help you identify the most compelling factors that will ultimately become the cornerstone of your campaign. This should engage and excite a potential sponsor and let them know that your club is something they should be a part of!

Being consistent and clearly outlining the associated benefits of **what** you are offering will maximise your chances of a successful campaign.

Lastly - Knowing your competition is another important consideration: Even if there are no direct competitors for your rugby club, there is always competition of some kind! This may be another social pastime or another sport, either way, being aware of what else is out there is critical. Understanding your competition will help you:



- Benchmark your club's offering
- Establish your competitive advantage
- Find your club's unique selling proposition

Having considered all of the above you probably already know **who** your target audience is which leads us nicely on to the next section.

WHO

With a solid understanding of the offering you wish to promote, it is now time to establish who your target audience is.

Defining your target audience may feel like a constraint, but just remember that you're not excluding anyone; you're simply choosing where to focus your efforts. This will also help you save resources. Focusing on the portion of the people most relevant to your offering will allow you to communicate and engage with them in a more compelling way.

So how to do this?

Here are 4 pillars that may help you establish exactly who your target audience is:

1. Think back to **WHAT!**

Think about what your offering might fulfil for a potential customer, and also think about how you differ from the competition —what makes you stand out? Broadly think about who might be interested and who may benefit from what your club is offering. Figuring out your unique selling point is the first step in identifying your ideal target audience.

Ultimately it all comes down to the wants and needs of you potential customers. Don't think about who you would like to sell to, think about who is looking for the sort of opportunity your club is offering.

2. Develop a **customer profile**

This may not be the easiest thing to do as in many cases the target audience can be quite diverse, however, it is certainly worth giving it a try. To make your communications as accurate as possible it helps to have an in-depth description of who your typical customer may be. This will include demographic and psychographic information:

Demographic information: This may include age, gender, location, ethnic background, marital status, income, and more.



Psychographic information: This type of information goes beyond the 'external' and identifies more about a customer's psychology, interests, hobbies, values, attitudes, behaviours, lifestyle, and more.

Demographic information will help you identify the type of person who will be interested in your club. Psychographic information goes one step further and nails down *why* they are interested.

An understanding of the above will help you match your club's offerings with the right people. Being able to satisfy their specific wants and needs will improve your chances of a positive outcome.

3. Find out where your audience is

We'll come on to this in more detail in the next section but in brief - It's not enough to just say who your target audience is. You need to establish which forms of media they consume and when. Are they addicted to apps? Are they on social media? The information you put together for your customer profile, combined with knowing where your audience hangs out, will facilitate the delivery of your message.

4. Monitor and Evolve

The work doesn't end after you've identified your target audience. It's essential to remain aware of current trends and also what your competition is up to. It's also important to monitor if and how your target audience evolves – for example, as people grow older their behaviours and consumption patterns will change. This will have an impact on how you reach them and what sort of content they respond to.

At this point we should know **what** we want to talk about and **who** we want to talk to, now it's time to consider **how** we get this message to them.

HOW

Getting to know **who** your target audience is should naturally start the process of establishing **how** you reach out to them in a meaningful way. In an ever-changing landscape where communications channels are becoming more and more fragmented, the key question is – which platforms should I be on? The answer to this largely on what your goals are and who your audience is! Another important consideration is your budget - but remember a small budget should not be seen as a barrier!

To give some perspective, the bullet points from page 1 have been paired with some communications platforms that may be relevant to these offerings:

- Playing Opportunities (club website / social media / local authority)
- Coaching / Volunteer Opportunities (club website / social media / local authority / scottishrugby.org)
- Programme or pitchside advertising (direct mail)
- Player Sponsorship (direct mail / local business publication / social media / club website)
- Use of the club for private functions (local press / local radio / club website)
- Club BBQ (club website / social media / posters in local community)
- Fundraising/Charity event (club website / social media / posters in local community)

The main thing to try and understand here is the combination of media platforms likely to be consumed by your target segment. A well-integrated campaign shared across a carefully selected set of platforms is likely to have the biggest impact.

In terms of social media, the image below outlines a range of platforms at your disposal:



There are no rights or wrongs here, think - which of these do my target audience use the most? Then... pick these! In this day and age Facebook, Twitter and YouTube should be the cornerstone of your social media presence.



Outside of social media there are plenty more traditional and non-traditional marketing platforms for you to consider:

Traditional

- Local press
- Direct mail
- Postcards
- Local radio
- Flyers
- Street signs
- Posters
- Give aways

Non-Traditional

- Social media
- E-zines to your member base
- Blogging
- Digital marketing
- Guerrilla marketing

Other

- Partner with local authorities
- Partner with local businesses / sponsors

What is often most effective is combining these to ensure you haven't excluded any segments of your target audience. The main benefit of non-traditional is that it tends to be more cost-effective and it encourages social engagement. Once again it must be stressed – the platforms you choose will be dictated by the **what** and the **who!**

What you must remember to do is pay attention to the response and reaction to your activity, as this is the main performance indicator for your campaign. The next section will outline how this can be done.

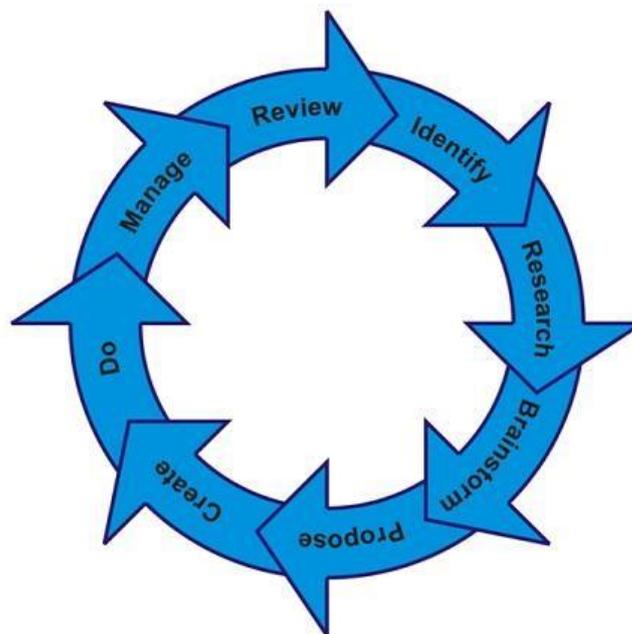
REVIEW

In many ways when your activity launches this is just the beginning! Some would argue that it never really ends...

Continuous evaluation of your club's promotional activity is an invaluable exercise as each marketing campaign that you do can teach you something about the effectiveness of your club's promotions - even failures can teach us something.

With every club having their own unique set of circumstances, lessons learned through previous campaigns are vitally important. The general marketing guidelines discussed in this document will still apply, however these aren't anywhere near as important as the lessons learned through an honest appraisal of your own club's activity. These specific lessons will help you in the formulation of the next campaign.

The whole process should be viewed as cyclical, where the final phase of one marketing cycle is always the beginning phase of the next one. Ultimately, reviewing a campaign should be the first step in preparing the next marketing campaign, the model below should help illustrate this.





Lastly - when evaluating campaign effectiveness you must consider metrics – what are the tangible outputs of your activity? You need to understand where you were at the start, versus where you were at the end of your campaign.

Relevant examples for rugby clubs may be:

- How many new members / players / volunteers did you acquire over that period of time?
- How many Facebook likes or twitter followers did you generate?
- How much money did that event make?
- How many people came to the match?
- How many hits did your website receive?
- Have you been able to take on an additional member of staff?

Again, make sure these are specific – they have to be every bit as specific as your communications. Accurate measurement is the first step to control and eventually, to improvement. Good metrics will alert you to which ideas you should replicate and which you should look to improve. Just like in business there must be a measurable return on investment (ROI) to demonstrate that your choice of activity has been worthwhile.