

Growing your Community Sports Club Business



Running Events Background Notes

Running Events within the Community

Overview

Events are very useful activities for the clubs because they are able to attract individuals and families to take part who a) are involved with the club and b) individuals who live in the community, but who are interested/want to take part in the event. There are also a wide range of events which can be run by the club and they can be used by the club to achieve a range of outcomes.

They can be run to;

- a) Build the clubs brand in the community
- b) Build the clubs reputation within the community
- c) Attract new “customers” to the club
- d) Generate income
- e) Have a social occasion for the club members and participants

The clubs needs to decide why it is running the event (there may be more than one reason and it might not always be to generate funds), to plan it well and to deliver it well.

A wide range of events are outlined below;

Who wants to be a Thousandaire? – This is very common in Ireland at the moment. A company will come with all of the templates and stage etc. for you to run it. The event can attract a wide range of participants from across the community.

Summer Ball – the summer or Christmas ball will take a huge amount of planning and effort. It can be a fund raising event but can also provide profile and reputation for the club.

White Collar Boxing – There are companies that will come in and organise this event for the clubs including the training for the participants. Where it can attract a wide audience is when the participants are from different clubs.

Scrap metal collection weekend – this will need to be run in partnership with a reputable dealer. The idea is that the club asks for the community to donate any waste metal it has lying around and the club also volunteers to pick it up. The activity takes place over a weekend.

Furniture Auction – this is a similar idea. The community are asked to donate any furniture and house hold goods that they have finished with. They are collected by the club on a Friday/Saturday and on the Sunday an auction is promoted across the community. This is a fund raising event. Some clubs are doing the same with clothes and are working in partnerships with local Charity shops. This provides the club with a reputation outcome as well as an income.

Disco for under 14/15's – there are very few discos run for this age group. If you do decide to run one of these then the stewarding needs to be very tight. Sligo RFC run 8 discos a year at their club house to generate income and to attract young people to the club.

http://www.irishrugby.ie/club/welcomingclubs/welcoming_clubs_index.php

IRFU Welcoming Clubs Programme; An IRFU initiative which provides clubs with a road map and training for the “team off the field” to assist them in running their sports club as efficiently as possible.

Wine and Art Evening – This fund raising event is run in several towns in Ireland. The “wine and art” evening is run in one of the local hotels. Regional artists are invited to exhibit their paintings and if any are sold they give a percentage to the fund. The wine is donated and therefore once the entry fee of €15 is paid, the wine is free to all present. There is also an auction of donated paintings from well-known regional artists.

Duathlon event - over 250 individuals will take part in a Duathlon this year at Tralee RFC (run 4k, cycle 20k, and run 3k) which leaves from the club house and returns to the club house. There are prizes, T shirts for all participants, music, BBQ and much more. The club not only generated an income but it also built up the brand awareness for the club and attracted new people to the club.

Christmas fair – before you decide to run a Christmas fair check that the date you have chosen doesn’t already have a Christmas event on it. You will be able to charge for the stalls to be there and/or take a percentage of their takings. The marketing needs to cover all of the community and you can generate further income through food, visits to Santa and Christmas raffles.

Ladies lunch – a good venue, food and drink with a good host are the ingredients for this lunch. It is a great opportunity for all of the ladies involved with the club to get together for a social event but it can be more. It can be a fund raiser but can also be used to promote the club and to attract new people to the club.

“Take me Out” – the most successful event I have seen this year was the “Take me out” evening which was run by the Ladies team at Sligo RFC. They had the videos sponsored, the hair and makeup sponsored and the printing sponsored. Over 500 tickets were sold (many through social media), there was an after event party in a local pub (tickets were also sold for this) and the event was a huge success for income, brand, data bases and reputation.

Model initiative – “Take a Model to the Dance” – this event has been run by Railway Union RFC in Dublin. Its aim was to build up awareness for the club, to build awareness about the Diner Dance and to drive numbers on Facebook. A local model agreed to be taken to the dance by the winner of a web based vote. A selected group of players and members who wanted to compete to take the model to the dance had their photographs and details on the web site. Anyone could go onto the Facebook site to vote for which person they thought should win the competition. Within a couple of weeks of being launched it generated a huge amount of publicity, interest and new people linking to the Facebook page.

Scratch Card - The Scratch Card Programme; in partnership with MacDonald’s a sports club has produced a “MacDonald’s Scratch Card” which they sell for €2. Every card wins something even if it is a coffee or a packet of chips but the prizes rise up through burgers to meals to cash prizes. The club paid for the actual cards to be printed (€1700) and MacDonald’s paid for the prizes. The club is well on the way to achieving their financial target and Macdonald’s have experienced an increase in the footfall.

Planning an Event

To run an event well with the outcomes you set out to achieve takes a huge amount of planning and commitment. It is therefore important that the club decides to only run one or two events each year and run them well.

There are four phases of planning an event and they are outlined below;

- Define the event – what are its objective, what is the vision that the stakeholders have, what is the budget and the pricing structure of event.
- Marketing the event – Who wants the tickets and why, how to contact these individuals, which marketing material to use and how this links into media plan.
- Operational plan – preparation of the venue and the staff, development of a customer experience and delivery on the day.
- Review – what went well and what didn’t.

Whilst all aspects of the event are important, perhaps the most important aspect is the selling of the tickets. Firstly you need to know who you are attracting to the event and why they would come. Is it for entertainment, if so what are they expecting to see/take part in? Once you know the type of person that you are going to attract you need to create some marketing material that tells them why they should come, how it fulfils their “wants and needs” and influences them to buy a ticket. You will also

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need to know which marketing channel (email, social media, posters, web site etc.) you can use to contact them. The selling needs to be “active” with all club members playing a role in promoting the event. It goes without saying that the experience needs to be good if you expect people to come back again!

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