

IRFU Welcoming Clubs Programme



Info Sheet #2: Building the Club Strategy

All of the clubs have limited resources (volunteers and money) to use in the development of the club business. It is therefore essential that they build a plan which optimises the resources that are available. The development of the plan will need an input and agreement from all of the key stakeholders and therefore time will need to be designated when everyone is available. It is also necessary to have one person who is designated as the "facilitator" who will move the process along. It is preferential that an independent person runs the planning but if this isn't possible one of the stakeholders, who will need to act impartially needs to be appointed.

Step 1:

The first step is to agree which areas of the club this plan will involve. It may be prudent to initially only focus on issues that are impacting on the business and to leave the playing/performance side for another time. However, there are some factors of the Grassroots Business Skills Programme that impact on the performance side of the business such as "how do the club use sales skills to sell the club to potential players".

Once this is agreed then the rules of discussion need to be set and agreed;

- What we do is for benefit of club not individual
- Each decision will impact one way or another on the whole of the club therefore everyone works as a team not in silos
- Informality – this shouldn't be formal and too structured
- Candidness – be candid but not destructive
- Open mindedness
- Agree on a plan and what needs to change to achieve the outcomes.

Step 2:

The second step is to agree a "vision" of where you would like the club to be in one or two year's time. The "vision" will include targets in the areas you choose to focus on and these will probably be something like;

- Selling:** We need to aim to get xyz number of new customers into the club within 1 or 2 year's time (depending on the time scale set). These customers might be families, players, sponsors or members.
- Customer Service:** In order to keep all existing customers and to attract/retain new ones we need to have *pdq* levels of customer service within the club.
- Data:** Within 1 or 2 years (depending on the time scale set) we need to have system *abc* up and running, we need to collect all of the data from everyone who is connected to the club and have *ccb* adult records and *bbc* family records.
- Communication:** Within one or two years the following communication channels will be active within the club (social media, email, direct mail, web site etc.) and we will be sending out the following communications each week... established within the club running the following teams...

When the "vision" is being agreed it is essential that the discussions recognise the importance of the following principles.

Each point that is decided upon needs to be:

Specific

Measurable – how many/how much?

Attainable with the resources available

Resourced as above

Time framed – one or two years

Step 3:

The third step will highlight what needs to change and the activities that need to take place in order to achieve the changes.

The most effective way of achieving this is to carry out a SWOT analysis. The facilitator will ask the stakeholders to make a list of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of each area as it stands today when compared with where you want to be (The Vision).

Strengths are internal strengths of the business

Weaknesses are the weaknesses of the business

Opportunities are external to the business – does the Government want to invest in Sport?

Threats – the local Council is withdrawing all of its support to sport.

This will highlight the weaknesses that exist in the business which will be the aspects of the business that need to be changed. These can then be translated into actions that need to take place in order to achieve the vision. The Strengths, Opportunities and Threats will have to be taken into consideration when developing the projects in step four.

Step 4:

The facilitators and the stakeholders have now agreed in principle about what needs to change. They then need to agree individual projects that need to take place and appoint a leader or individual working parties who will be responsible for delivering the change during the time agreed. For example there may be working groups who;

Focus on the process of attracting families from the local schools to the club. This may include changes in sales processes and the up skilling of certain volunteers, the development of customer service skills and data management within the business.

A working group to attract more sponsorship to the club. This will include an analysis on the sales skills that exist within the business and possible training, the development of a customer service ethos and customer service training and the development of a communication strategy.

Data management. This may well require the development of data processes within the business, the adoption of a specific system and the development of a data ethos within the business.

Communication. The development of a Social media strategy to complement what is already taking place.

Women's Rugby. A working party to work in the community, with sponsors and with existing players to develop the Women's section.

Step 5:

The groups will have to meet every 6 weeks to monitor the progress and to work together where "cross overs" of actions exist