



Scottish Rugby Moving Clubs Forward Workshop

How to: Develop your role in the community

Overview

Each club sits within a community which is typically made up of several thousand people. Within these communities are the potential customers for all of the clubs “products” including participants, businesses who might hire the facilities or sponsor the club, individuals for events, families, members and spectators. The club needs to ensure that it is “visible” within the community and, in order to optimise the potential of that community, it needs to focus on the following;

Brand Awareness

Every Sports Club Business needs to develop its own “brand” which sets it apart from the other clubs and which is recognisable within its community. To achieve this, there must be a name and design/logo which is distinct from the competition so that customers and potential customers (participants, members, families, businesses, schools etc.) recognise it. As the brand becomes established the club will need to develop its own values such as fun and professionalism, safe and welcoming. If it is decided that these are the values the club is to be known for, then they must be consistent and members will need to strive to deliver them on a consistent basis.

Points to remember:

- Branding is the club identity which goes beyond the name and logo. The brand is what the club is to the world. What is it known for, what makes it special, what does it have a reputation for? The brand needs to be protected since, for instance, if the club is well known for “looking after and nurturing young talent” then it will be trusted by parents who will bring their young players to it.
- A good brand is memorable – so ensure the logo is strong.
- It is important that the brand logo is consistently and properly used on all occasions and in all settings. It should also be ensured that coaches understand the value of the club’s reputation in areas of delivery and support, since this is one aspect of the brand which needs to be protected.

Free Visibility - Yellow Pages and Thompson Local Directory

A business telephone line will normally ensure automatic entry into both of these. Yellow Pages will be delivered into every household once a year and also has an online presence. Thompson Local Directory is also delivered into every household on a regular basis.

Free Visibility - Local Websites

There are often a range of local web sites that offer the opportunity for a free listing. These include those run by local authorities, the Tourist Board, local what’s on, and Town and County web sites. The Governing Body and Sport Scotland may also have club listings.

Visibility - Signage

If the club is on a road then it is an ideal opportunity to have a sign (planning permitting) which can create awareness for the club and build its brand. The local authority highways department will be able to detail the number of cars that use the road each day, which will be important information to use in a sponsorship deal. Also, many towns have designated banner sites that could be used to promote fixtures, open days or other events.

Partnerships within the local community

The club should investigate its local community and find out if there are any potential partners. For example:

- Schools – are there local schools that need rugby or football coaching but can't find the relevant coaches?
- Councils – does the Council have similar health, sport and activity aims and could a partnership be formed to deliver these?
- Community networks – are there any community networks that could be worked with in partnership to promote the club, that could base themselves at the club, or that have contacts which could be used?

Supporting the local community

Showing support for the local community could lead to the community supporting the club. Consider being stewards at the Christmas procession, taking a table at the local Charities dinner, or providing the club's facilities for a charitable event. This visible support will build the club's reputation and contact with potential new customers.

CASE STUDY KILLARNEY RFC

Killarney RFC focuses on “winning volunteers” from the Community and generating support from the local community by being seen to playing a role in the development of the Community. They have a comprehensive press/PR programme which promotes the club and its activities across the community, it supports all local initiatives such as the Flag Day, they steward the Irish Open and the local Triathlon, they sponsor other club activities and they congratulate other clubs on their successes.

By being seen to play a role in supporting the community they 1) get volunteers who see their involvement in supporting the Community not the rugby club and 2) support from local businesses that perceive the club as supporting the community as a whole.

CASE STUDY ARBROATH RFC

Community involvement has always been a large part of Arbroath RFC's activities off the pitch. They have staffed the ticket booths at the Arbroath Seafest Weekend for several years; have coordinated the Park and Ride at the Seafest Spectacular and also helped run the bar at the Arbroath Round Table Annual Beer Festival - Toonfest.

They view these activities as mutually beneficial to both themselves and the wider local community. It gives them the opportunity to raise much needed funds, interact and be visible in the local community (which can help with player / volunteer recruitment) but, most importantly, to play their part in supporting their fellow volunteers in the organisation of these local events. They believe that by being volunteers themselves in their own small club, they have a full appreciation of the

overwhelming challenges that organising events on such a scale can bring, and are only too happy to support and help wherever they can.

Running an Open Day Running an “Open Day” at your club could bring a range of benefits to the club which include a) generation of income b) building up the awareness of the club in the local community c) building up the reputation of the club in the local community and d) it could attract new people to the club for the first time who could become “customers” of the club – participants, volunteers, sponsors, members, spectators or participants for the events. The club will need to decide why it is running the event and which outcomes it is hoping to achieve before it starts and include this information in the “event plan”. A comprehensive plan of how to run an Open Day is included in another “How to” guide.

Running Events within the Community

Overview – Events are very useful activities for clubs as they attract a) individuals and families to take part who are involved with the club or b) who are not involved with the club but who live in the community. A wide range of events can be organised by the club which can achieve a range of outcomes, including:

- Building the club’s brand in the community
- Building the club’s reputation within the community
- Attracting new “customers”
- Generating income
- Having a social occasion for club members and participants.

There is a comprehensive “How to” guide which focusses on Events in the club information that is attached.

CASE STUDY AYR RFC

Integration with the Community

The club is totally integrated into the Community. It has 5 Community Development officers who are developing the game and providing sporting activity for the young children locally. Over the weekend there are 540 players involved in the sport with 380 of them being juniors.

The club is fully supported by the local business community who are involved mainly through their CSR/Community involvement budgets. The outcome for them is a) providing support for the local community to promote sport and health and b) to build their reputation through being associated with a strong local brand.

The Club also focusses on supporting its sponsors through a pre match lunch, the provision of season tickets, providing brand awareness and tickets/invitations for any major games they play in.

Over 500 local people support the team at home games.

The Club runs a series of events (they have individuals whose only role is to run one of the events) that focus on providing something for the Community e.g. Bonfire night (3000 people), Ladies Day (300 ladies in a marquee pre match), Farmers Day (150 farmers for a pre match lunch) and the Presidents Day for local businesses (speaker and auction which raises £20,000)

CASE STUDY LINLITHGOW RFC

Community links

Linlithgow RFC is a Community Rugby club with two senior XV's, 240 u18s boys playing the game and girls rugby up to u15. The club has a Development officer and two Modern Apprentices working in the local schools and who create a pathway between the schools and the club.

Indoor Facility – Twelve months ago the club built an indoor training area which is now used by all of the Community as well as the rugby club to provide an excellent indoor training area. The cost was £500,000 and they received a grant of £350,000 from Sport Scotland and the SRU. The community uses include Youth Football, Archery, Walking Football, Handball and the local schools using it for sport. There is also a gym which can be used by the Community.

At this stage the club hasn't seen any financial or membership benefits from having the Indoor Area but it has developed the reputation of the club and the brand awareness of the club.

The club also allows the Council to put a marquee on its land for 2 weeks in the summer for a Civic Festival. This has brought huge benefit to the club house bar takings.

CASE STUDY PERTSHIRE RFC

The Club "Brand" and its links into the Community

The Club aims to be a good Community and Family club which is welcoming, which promotes the values of rugby and which is valued by the Community.

The focus of the club is around Fun, Fitness and Friendship.

It has recently produced a video to promote the values of rugby and the Community Connection. This has been distributed throughout the region.

The Club has a girls section and a strong junior section (over 200 children) where the focus is on providing quality coaching and support (they recently held an information evening about nutrition for sport and had over 80 parents present).

There is also an "athletic development programme" for the talented players across all age groups.

There are 75 coaches who are encouraged to develop their qualifications. Like the Committee members there are job descriptions for coaches, team managers and administrators.

The club also has two full time development officers and two apprentices working in the 5 secondary schools and 36 Primary schools.