

WHAT A **GOOD CLUB** LOOKS LIKE

A photograph of a man and a woman shaking hands on a tennis court. The man is on the left, wearing a blue polo shirt with three white stripes on the sleeve, and is smiling. The woman is on the right, wearing a black t-shirt, and is also smiling. She is holding a tennis racket with an orange frame and a white handle. The background is a blurred tennis court with a green fence and a building in the distance. The image is overlaid with a blue and yellow graphic design at the bottom.

**A 10-COURT RACQUET AND
FITNESS CENTRE LOCATED IN A
RURAL PART OF THE SOUTH WEST
REGION FOCUSED ON WELLBEING**

Atlantic Racquet Centre

ABOUT THIS CLUB:

- 1,061 members
- 22 paid staff
- £250,000 turnover
- 364 players on programme
- 6 coaches
- Charitable company limited by guarantee
- 40 volunteers

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“Exercise, socialise and learn together”

PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

- Carry out a stakeholder mapping exercise to determine who is best to work with, linked to shared vision and aligned goals
- Be open and accessible, especially towards any organisation seeking an opportunity to grow and collaborate
- Proactively reach out to community groups as well as any under-represented groups to remove any participation barriers

BEING INCLUSIVE & RESPONDING TO LOCAL NEEDS

- Understand your local demographic and try to create offers that meet the needs of those you want to target
- Map out your local area and look at what is around you in terms of schools, businesses and community groups
- Be clear about your role within the community, and consider who else you could collaborate with for the greater good

CLEAR PURPOSE AND PLAN

- Our vision and mission is our ‘North Star’ and informs decisions
- Lead with your purpose when engaging new partners, recruiting for volunteers and signing up new members
- Be open and transparent about what you are and what you are not
- It’s important to review progress against the plan and keep members regularly informed

COMPETENT COMMITTEE & COACHES

- Have clear role descriptions for the board of trustees, including skills required
- Have an open and transparent recruitment and appointment process; advertise but also head hunt
- A business-like approach will ensure the board are empowered to lead the organisation and also held to account
- Ensure board members have an annual effectiveness review and individual appraisal process to help with continuous improvement
- Outside of the main board, create a volunteering programme to engage more people to help with succession planning
- Borrow ideas from organisations like the National Trust for processes like sign-up, induction, reward and recognition etc.
- Have clear job descriptions, including on and off-court requirements when recruiting new coaches
- Establish clear operational policies to help members understand the club’s policy on coaching

RECRUITMENT & SUCCESSION PLANNING

- When promoting vacancies, sell the benefits of helping the centre, contributing to its success and being part of an inclusive culture
- Keep your volunteer database engaged and informed about potential opportunities
- Send more than one person to each course or workshop to develop a batch of people rather than rely on one individual
- Think ahead: your best person could leave at any time
- Consider part-funding coaching qualifications to help grow your own workforce; link it in to staying at the club for a period to ensure payback
- Use Tennis Leaders to develop young volunteers within local schools; offer free places for those who are happy to give time back to the club

TENNIS PROGRAMME

- As the main source of income and the key to retaining members, the coaching programme takes priority, but there is a balance to strike
- Include all internal competitions within the membership fee to reinforce the value for money
- Formalise member club sessions by using trained volunteers to help facilitate the sessions
- Be smart about programming, e.g. red tennis next to cardio and access to the gym
- Consider offering a direct debit junior membership and wrap coaching into this fee to keep it simple and affordable for parents
- Make sure every session is serving a purpose and linked to the overall vision of the club



EFFECTIVE MARKETING

- Members are your best club advocates and therefore key to marketing
- Local schools can be a marketing channel to reach parents/carers. Create partnerships and get club content on their website/social media/newsletters
- Don’t waste money on flyers or posters - use social media as it is the cheapest and most effective way to reach people
- Run short bursts of social media advertising as and when you need it

BASIC IT, INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Utilise software to save time and money; either a dedicated management tool or a combination of tools based on your individual needs
- Take time to set up the reporting functions as this will save time further down the line; be clear about what you want to report
- Invest in sustainability in the short-term for long-term gains; we are now in a position where 55% of our energy comes from solar
- Embed energy efficiency into the culture of the organisation so that everyone takes ownership and responsibility

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & INCOME GENERATION

- Use an online accounting package to save time and money
- Ensure you have expertise on the board to oversee the financial management; consider paying someone to do the day to day book-keeping
- Regularly assess your income streams and make any necessary efficiencies
- Create a sponsorship proposition for local businesses and partners using assets within the club e.g. indoor courts, signage, windbreaks
- Be creative with easy fundraising e.g. buy a brick scheme
- Actively seek out partnerships - don’t wait to be approached
- Get to know your members to see if they have connections who may be interested in helping the club

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

- Retention first and recruitment through word of mouth will follow
- Offer monthly membership options, as subscriptions are the norm
- Run a series of open days throughout the year and use these to raise awareness and invite the local community into the club
- Run short bursts of digital advertising driven by a specific need e.g. gym membership, coaching programme spaces

MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

- Focus on retention; growth will happen through turning existing members into advocates
- Monitor satisfaction through an annual survey and short targeted surveys on specific items
- Spend time reinforcing the value for money; make the membership so good that people find it hard to cancel through FOMO (fear of missing out)
- Regularly celebrate members through their achievements and contributions - consider ‘member appreciation days’ where you hand out fun awards