Rugby Season Starter Activities

Welcome to the Rugby season!

The Australian Rugby Union (ARU) Media & Communications and Marketing Departments have put together the following media, public relations and marketing tips and examples that we hope your Club will find helpful throughout the Rugby season.

From your junior recruitment activity and registration days to Grand Final day, there are many opportunities for you to use media, public relations and marketing activities to help achieve your Club's objectives.

Media and Public Relations Tips

Media releases

A media release may be used before an event to promote or publicise it, or after an event to report on it.

When producing a media release, follow these guidelines:

- Make sure the information is current and relevant.
- Create a headline that will grab the attention of the journalist.
- Write the media release in short and snappy sentences.
- Make sure the most important information is in the first paragraph i.e. who, what, when, where, why and how.
- Use simple language that's easy to understand.
- Provide photographs (where applicable) and check what format best suits the media e.g. photographs of last year's recruitment activity, action shots from key matches, etc.
- Include the current date on the media release.
- Supply contact details of a Club person for further information.
- Check the media's deadlines.

The ideal media release should answer six key questions.

- What is the event? What is going to happen?
- Where is it happening?
- Who is it happening to?
- When is it happening?
- Why is it happening?
- How is it happening?

A sample media release, which your Club can modify for its own recruitment activity is available from www.rugby.com.au/tryrugby by following the links to season starter information.

Don't forget to include your contact details, date and personalise the release so that it is relevant to your Club. You may also want to include your Club's logo.

Media contacts

Once your media release is prepared, send it to the relevant media contacts in your area. You may already have established contacts in your local media. If not:

- Create an up-to-date list of media contacts in your city/town, particularly local media e.g. Community Newspaper groups and radio stations are always looking for story ideas for activities in their local area.

- Always follow up media releases with a phone call to see if the journalist has received your release and needs any further information.

Newspaper

Newspapers are in the business of supplying news. For Clubs, the focus of news is publishing results, announcements of special achievements and human-interest stories e.g. “local boy selected to represent Victoria in the National Under 16s Championship”. Therefore, it is much more advisable to target local newspapers than metropolitan newspapers.

The newspaper is also an avenue for:

- Match previews and reports
- Results columns
- Advertising
- Upcoming competitions and promotions
- Supplements
- Feature articles
- Interviews
- Photographs
- Weekly draws

What often works well is if you can tie your story into a special event week e.g. run a feature on junior Rugby in Kids Week.

Remember to keep in contact with your local media after your recruitment activity and work with them on different story ideas about your Club throughout the season.

Public Relations - developing an interesting angle for media

Public relations activities allow you to publicise and promote your organisation, its people and its product, in your case Rugby. Below are some ideas for promoting your Club throughout the season and beyond.

- Make use of personalities within your Club i.e. people who have profile within the community.

- Identify a few senior players within your Club who are happy to talk to the media and the public about playing Rugby and encourage them to be spokespeople for the Club. Senior players could talk about the Club's family environment and/or the Club as a whole i.e. seniors and juniors.

- Take advantage of good news stories such as increases in registrations, award nights and community involvement e.g. with local schools and/or other sports clubs.

Don't be shy providing media with as many different story ideas as you can - if they can't use them, they will let you know.

If you have a story that profiles your Club and/or Rugby in general that you think should be shared with Rugby supporters around Australia, send it to the ARU at media@rugby.com.au

In summary

Important things to remember when working with the media are:

- Know your subject
- Believe in its appeal
- Know your market
- Be familiar with all media personnel
- Know media requirements for reporting
- Always have a person from your Club identified as the media contact.

Marketing Tips

Identifying Target Groups

A marketing strategy will only be successful if it is aimed at the appropriate group of people.

The best approach is to target the audience or groups you want to reach and focus your program directly at them.

When trying to identify the target market, consider the following list:

- Gender
- Age groups
- Single people or couples
- Family groups
- Occupation
- Ethnic groups
- Educational background
- Location – town or suburb
- Geography – distance to travel
- Other leisure interests
- Time available for leisure.

Advertising and Promotions

A major component of the marketing strategy is promotion. There are many forms of promotion, from purchasing material for visual displays to paying for advertising space in the local paper. Promotion is not just an advertising campaign - it is creating a positive, general public awareness of your Club and its activities.

The Promoter

Anyone who is willing to learn the principles of marketing and has been provided with clear objectives and a target audience can undertake the promotion for their Club's recruitment activities.

Promotion steps

The following steps can be followed to conduct a successful marketing campaign:

- Have a clear idea of what you want to achieve through the campaign. This will help to plan relevant activities to meet your Club's objectives.

- Construct the right message for your target audience. This message must also be backed up with support information that tells the audience where and how they can get involved in your activities.

- Identify the promotion avenues and the channels that you will use to distribute your message.

- Create in the presentation of your communications and activities the "tone" that is the most appropriate to your audience.

Below is an example using the promotion steps listed above.

You are in charge of promotions at the Hackett Rugby Club. The Club's main aim over the next two years is to increase its junior player numbers. You have been asked to organise a campaign, which will help the Club achieve this aim.

1. *Set Your Aim*
   To recruit more junior Rugby players. (Be specific to the age groups you see the greatest need e.g. 6 – 8 year olds.)

2. *Choose an Appropriate Activity*
   Hold a registration day in line with your recruitment activity including demonstrations and opportunities for potential players to get involved and try Rugby.

3. *Message*
   Use the sign-on registration day to show potential members that '*Hackett Rugby Club'* is a social, friendly Club, which encourages family groups.

   Use the *Retention and Recruitment strategies* document for tips and tools i.e. flyers and posters to assist in promoting how they can get involved in playing Rugby.

   Accentuate the positive attributes of the Club and the benefits of being a member.

4. *Avenues of Promotion*
   Target your local area – this is where most of your potential members are likely to come from. Use the Club registration flyers to distribute at established venues such as Rugby fields, sport facilities and most importantly the schools in your local area. If you don't have a presence in your local schools, it should be a priority to establish one, as this is where all your target market is.

   You should also consider advertising in community newspapers or seeking editorial space. Put notices on shopping centre notice boards, in sports shop windows, etc.

   Encourage people to come along to your Club's registration sign-on days by using incentives to promote it as a fun day, with prizes and a barbecue to follow. You may even consider holding a registration day at your local school.

Always test your ideas. Try them out on your friends, family and other Club members initially. If you get a favourable response, test it further, on a sample of the particular audience you are trying to reach.

Other mediums for promotion are:

- Brochures, newsletters, annual reports
- Professional journals and magazines
- Public speaking
- Displays and demonstrations
- Public notice boards
- Flyers
- Local website e.g. schools, local council, local media
- Local radio
- Mementos and Photographs
- If you are fortunate enough, television!

We wish you and your Club all the very best for a fun, safe and successful Rugby season!