

PLANNING FOR YOUR CLUB

THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS

Planning is the key to the future for all sporting and recreation organizations no matter their level, activity or size.

WHY PLAN?

Whether at national, state or local level, organizations need to plan their long-term viability in order to grow.

Planning helps to:

- Look at where the organization has come from and where it is now, where it wants to go and how it is going to get there.
- Identify the main objectives of the organization.
- Encourage the members to get involved in the development of the organization.
- Adjust to changes in the current environment that have an impact on the organization.
- Ensure that resources (human, physical and financial) are used effectively.
- Evaluate the organization.
- **Bring order into the hectic business of running a sporting organization!**

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS?

Try to involve as many people in the planning process as possible. The more people who are consulted in the development of the plan, the more it will reflect the true direction of your organization. Your members will also feel that the plan belongs to them and they will be more comfortable in assisting with its implementation.

A group of people should be invited to a planning meeting to brainstorm the basics of the plan. This group should be representative of:

- o board/committee members
- o volunteers
- o sport participants
- o paid staff
- o coaches
- o facilities operators
- o officials
- o sponsors
- o parents
- o other stake-holders in your organization

After your planning meeting, the draft plan should be circulated as widely as possible to your members to make sure that it reflects their needs.

WHEN SHOULD YOU PLAN?

It is important to set aside some time for your planning to ensure that it receives the attention that it requires. It is probably most economical to schedule your planning meeting with one of your sport's regular gatherings.

This could be:

- A general meeting, A club tournament, A social occasion

You will need to set aside a specific timeslot in your schedule (perhaps a day or half-day) for your planning meeting. The meeting should be long enough to develop the basic framework of the plan so the duration will depend on the size and complexity of your organization. Remember, the plan should be reviewed regularly to monitor your progress and make any necessary modifications. The planning meeting should be a regular feature of your organization's calendar.

The Planning Pathway:

FORM A PLANNING COMMITTEE

A small group of committed people should get the planning process under way and ensure the plan is implemented and reviewed regularly.

HOLD A PLANNING WORKSHOP

Invite a group of people (including administrators, coaches, officials, athletes, sponsors and facilities managers) to attend a planning meeting to develop the framework of your plan. A facilitator, or a person who is experienced in leading planning workshops, may assist your organization to get the most out of the workshop.

DEVELOP YOUR PLAN

The planning committee or an entrusted individual writes up your plan. Remember it does not need to be a complex document — it's best to keep it simple! The plan needs to contain some basic elements:

- o **Mission** — a brief statement explaining the purpose of your club or group and why it exists. An example may be "to promote tennis as an enjoyable, healthy sport for people of all ages and ability levels in our community."
- o **Organizational Goals** — statements that explain the broad directions of your organisation. For example, "to encourage the provision of opportunities for participation in tennis by all members of the community."
- o **Objectives** — what specifically does your organisation want to achieve by the end of the planning period? Make sure your objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and have a timeframe. An example of an objective may be "to double the number of registered junior players by the start of competition."
- o **Actions** (What) — what needs to be done to achieve the objectives? An example of an action to achieve the objective of doubling the number of junior players might be "to produce a promotional brochure for distribution to local schools."
- o **Responsibilities** (Who) — who is responsible for completing the actions?

o **Timeframes** (When) — when do the actions need to be completed?

o **Resources** — How much is it going to cost?

CONSULT WITH YOUR MEMBERS

- Make sure that your members understand your plans.
- Remember that it is their plan too!
- Make any necessary changes to the plan.

PROMOTE YOUR PLAN

- Make sure your new plan gets plenty of publicity — put it in your newsletter, send a copy to sponsors.
- It's your plan – you should be proud of it.
- The more you promote the plan, the more people will know about it and help you to implement it.
- **IMPLEMENT IT!** -There's no point in developing a plan that will gather dust on the shelves. Make your plan a living, breathing document that helps people to get the job done.
- Evaluate it and modify it if necessary — it may not be exactly what you want or can achieve first time around.

CELEBRATE SUCCESS

As objectives in the plan are achieved, let everyone know about it, no matter how small.

EFFECTIVE CLUB MEETINGS

If you are inexperienced in chairing formal meetings, such as the club AGM or the monthly club meetings, this resource provides some helpful hints.

The chairperson's role is to control the meetings, accept motions and amendments, rule on points of order and see that the wishes of the meeting are carried out correctly and expediently. Meetings do not have to be run formally all the time and it is up to the chairperson to decide how formally the meeting will be run. However there are times when you, as leader, must know the ESSENTIAL RULES in order to: **Give everyone a fair go, Cut out 'waffle' and Reach decisions.**

AGENDA

The agenda is the basis of any meeting and gives direction, structure and purpose to the meeting. The agenda should be drawn up jointly by the chairperson and secretary and should be followed in order, unless the meeting directs otherwise. The agenda should be circulated prior to the meeting so that members may attend the meeting prepared to make a well-informed contribution.

1) Call the meeting to order at least several minutes before the opening. Starting on time is essential.

THE QUORUM

The constitution may specify a quorum – a specified minimum number of eligible members who must be present at a meeting to make the proceedings valid at the specified starting time. If necessary, the chairperson may use his or her power to delay the appointed starting time to give every opportunity for the necessary number to be present. Being satisfied that a quorum is present, the meeting should be formally declared open. If the numbers at the meeting fall below the quorum at any stage during proceedings of the meeting, no further decisions should be made. Club rules may allow partial attendance at meetings and therefore the meeting can continue.

2) Open the meeting at the arranged time.

- Declare the meeting officially open. This is important as the business of the meeting is recorded from this point on
- Identify the meeting by quoting specific title and class of it, e.g. make the opening a firm statement. "I declare this regular... (monthly) meeting... (South City Youth Club) open".

3) Attendance and Apologies

- Record all members present;
- Introduce any visitors or special guests and formally welcome them to the meeting; and
- Call for apologies. Ask for a formal motion that apologies be accepted.

4) Minutes

It is the chairperson's duty to ask for any corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting (amend if necessary) and then call for the motion. "It is the wish of the meeting that I sign these minutes (as corrected, if they were amended) as a true and accurate record of the previous... (monthly) meeting held on... (date)." The sole purpose of confirming or adopting minutes is to ensure their accuracy. Reading lengthy minutes in detail is unnecessary, boring and destructive to a meeting.

5) Matters arising from the minutes

- List matters to be decided on the agenda
- Discussion should be confined strictly to matters in the minutes which will not be covered in reports
- Matters arising from the minutes are usually confined to specific questions or actions someone was appointed to take.

6) Correspondence

- The chairperson should ask the secretary to present a list of inward and outward correspondence, in chronological order and put it to the meeting
- The chairperson should request a formal motion...”that all inward correspondence be received” and “that outward correspondence be approved”;
- No discussion should be allowed before the motion is presented;
- The secretary should read to the club or group, the date, MEANINGFUL contents of the letter and the signatory; and
- Any member may request that the whole context of the letter be read to the meeting.

7) Reports

a) The Treasurer

- The chairperson calls on the treasurer for the regular financial report;
- The chairperson asks for any discussion arising from the report – “The report is now open for discussion”;
- A formal motion is needed of a list of all accounts for payment to be paid as it is a legal requirement for audit
- A formal motion is needed to adopt the report. “That the report be received”.

b) Committee

- These reports should be brief
- The committee chairperson should present them beforehand (in writing) and during the meeting, so that they can be incorporated into the minutes. If you can insist on written reports, you will speed up your meetings.

Here’s a simple formula for reports:

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| • WHAT? | • WHEN? |
| • WHY? | • HOW? |
| • WHO? | • HOW MUCH? |
| • WHERE? | • RECOMMENDATIONS. |

This format keeps reports ‘on the point’. The recommendations (when appropriate) are almost like a ‘motion’ to give the executive something definite to discuss.

- Discussion and action may follow each report
- Each report must be adopted after presentation and discussion. “That the report be received”. No seconder is required.

c) Other

- These should be brief and deal with specific topics.

8) Discussion on Motions

- The constitution should lay down how much notice to give the chairperson of business to be discussed at a meeting
- These motions must be placed on the agenda
- Any motions proposed without sufficient notice may be rejected by the chairperson but are accepted as notices of motion for the next meeting.

MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

All items of business requiring a decision must come before the meeting by way of a motion and if passed, becomes a resolution. A motion should be proposed before the chairperson allows any debate

or discussion on the topic. This promotes an orderly discussion. Once a motion has been moved the chairperson should make sure discussion doesn't depart from the point.

MOVING A MOTION

The mover, standing and addressing the chair introduces the motion, "I move that..." This introduces an item of business for the meeting's scrutiny and has the floor when there is no other motion before the meeting.

The mover must state their case to the meeting on that motion only and may not be interrupted by the chairperson unless the motion is frivolous or ridiculous and is unlikely to be seconded. The motion should be clear, concise and unambiguous and not be introduced to the meeting until it is clear. The mover is granted right of reply at the end of the debate.

THE SECONDER

This implies there is support for the motion. The speaker must introduce his/her support with ... "I second that motion". The seconder, who has no right of reply, may speak when he or she seconds the motion or reserve a speech until after further debate. If there is no seconder the motion lapses.

Immediately a motion has been proposed and seconded the chairperson can save time and cut out repetition by declaring "Does anyone wish to speak AGAINST the motion?" If NO, the motion may be put to the vote. If YES, the order of debate should be speaker against, then for (i.e. alternately), with no speaker (except the seconder's reserved speech and mover's right of reply, point of order, or personal explanation, e.g. correcting a misquote) speaking more than once.

AMENDMENTS

- Are introduced by "Mr Chairperson (or Madam Chairperson), I would like to make an amendment that..."
- Must be clear and precise
- An amendment must not negate the motion;
- A competent amendment may:
 - Add to the motion
 - Subtract from the motion
 - Substitute words within the motion
 - Alter the wording of the motion
- Neither the mover nor the seconder to the original motion or prior amendments may move or second an amendment
- Amendments should be placed before the meeting one at a time (taken in the order in which they affect the terms of the original motion)
- When an amendment is raised, all that have spoken previously may speak again
- Before any vote is taken, the chairperson should make sure the meeting understands the points for and against and the actual wording of the amendment
- When an amendment is carried, it is incorporated in the motion, which can then be further discussed or amended
- If an amendment is lost the original or previously amended motion again has the floor and the latest amendment is not incorporated into the motion.

ADVICE ON AMENDMENTS

- Restrict the number of amendments to two for each original motion;
- To avoid confusion, amendments to amendments are not advised;
- Each amendment must be relevant;
- Insist that amendments be handed in writing to the secretary before voting;
- Before members are asked to vote, the amendment is read to the meeting; and
- Amendments should be discussed and ratified ONE AT A TIME.

CLOSURE OF DEBATE

- The chairperson should decide when the vote is to be put;
- The mover of the original motion should then be offered their right of reply
- The motion or amendment to be ratified must be read out to the members, so that all clearly understand the motion or amendment
- The chairperson could also summarize the arguments for and against.

FORMAL MOTIONS

- These are new items of business
- All need seconders;
- May be introduced when either a motion or amendment is under discussion; Further discussion must be suspended until the chairperson accepts or rejects the formal motion at his/her discretion
- May not be moved or seconded by a person who has:
 - moved the original motion
 - seconded the original motion; and
 - spoken on the motion or amendment being discussed prior to the formal motion being moved
- All formal motions suspend debate on amendments and motions, except for "The Previous Question" which only covers motions, not amendments.

VOTING

At the end of a debate, the chairperson puts the motion to the vote. Different forms of voting are: by voices, show of hands, members standing, secret ballot or by a division. Unless specified otherwise in the constitution a SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE by voices is often enough to cause the chairperson to declare the result. If there is any doubt on the voice vote, the chairperson may call, or be called upon by a member, for a show of hands. The constitution should nominate the necessary majority needed to ensure motions are resolved. Unless someone demands a ballot or division immediately after the voice or show of hands vote had been declared, the decision of the chairperson is binding. If there is an equal number of votes for and against on the first and second show of hands and after a ballot, the proposal is rejected. The CONSTITUTION should provide for voting power of the chairperson who may have: a deliberate vote only; a casting vote only; a deliberate and casting vote; no vote.

If the motion (as amended) is lost, the meeting proceeds to the next item of business.

POINTS OF ORDER

This is introduced by "I rise to a point of order...".

It covers a breach of rules or decorum.

The point of order must be made when the breach occurs.

- No seconder is required.
- The speaker may be interrupted.
- The point of order is not open to debate, not subject to amendment.
- It is subject to the chairperson's ruling.

9) General Business

- The chairperson can decide whether a point should be discussed, although only relatively minor points can be brought up
- Notice of motion for the next meeting may be brought up with a written copy of the motion, signed and dated, being handed to the secretary
- The chairperson should restrict discussion to the interest of the meeting.

10) Next Meeting

Discuss the time, date and venue for the next meeting to ensure everyone knows the details.

11) Closure

- This is the signal to say that no further business is being conducted at the meeting
- The time for winding up proceedings is up to the chairperson
- The chairperson should close the meeting when there is no further business or when continuing would serve no worthwhile purpose
- The normal way of closing is for the chairperson to rise, thank members for their cooperation, thank visitors, wait for silence and announce, "I declare this... (monthly) meeting of the... (South City Youth Club) closed"

- The chairperson should emphasize that the meeting is over by leaving the chair as soon as possible whilst declaring that further discussion is unofficial and leaderless.

THE CHAIR – ESSENTIAL TASKS

A person in the chair leads but does not direct. Although he or she controls procedure and conduct, that person is in charge of the meeting, which is conducted for the benefit of the members.

Before the Meeting

- Planning is essential. Before the meeting discuss the agenda with the secretary to determine what should be accomplished
- Know the constitution and standing orders for the conduct of meetings. Departure from any special rules of procedure could make the business of the meeting invalid
- Act as host – meet and greet your members. You are responsible for making them feel welcome and wanted.

At the Meeting

- Don't sit in the 'chair' until you are ready to start the meeting
- Follow the agenda strictly, unless directed otherwise by the meeting. Know the order of the agenda;
- Keep the meeting moving in the desired direction. Be firm but tactful when members deviate from the issue under discussion
- Try to be impartial – be there for the benefit of the meeting
- Listen attentively and keep a concise summary of proceedings
- Attempt to get all members to contribute to the meeting
- Ensure that there is fair discussion on each issue and that all points are expressed before the meeting is called upon to vote
- Direct the order of speaking – mover first, then others, alternating between speakers for and against a motion
- Rule on points of order
- Be enthusiastic – zest instills enthusiasm into the members
- Attempt to keep the meeting moving, don't have any awkward breaks
- Arise and leave the chair at the end of the meeting or the beginning of any recess.

TAKE THE “IN” OUT OF INEFFECTIVE

10 STEPS TO RUNNING SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

10 STEPS THAT MAKE EFFECTIVE MEETING GROUPS

1. There is plenty of discussion but it's mainly on the point. If discussion strays, someone brings it back quickly – not necessarily the chair or leader.
2. The members understand their task clearly. They may have had to spend some time working this out but then they are committed to it.
3. The members actively listen to each other. They don't just keep silent. They give each idea a fair hearing and don't jump onto unrelated ideas.
4. The group does not evade disagreement. When there is a disagreement, or problem, the group uses its energy to focus on the problem, not the person.
5. Members are encouraged to reveal their opposition and not 'bottle it up' till after the meeting – a common fault in a weak group.
6. There is no personal attack either openly or by veiled suggestion. Members are inclined to give positive respect and recognition. They focus on overcoming obstacles.
7. The leader does not dominate. 'Leadership' shifts from time to time. The group uses different leaders for their specific abilities.
8. There is little evidence of power struggles and no posturing or point scoring. Control is not an issue – it's the job and the sense of teamwork which is important.
9. The members are conscious about their effectiveness as a team. They are very aware of their clients and are not self-serving as a group.
10. The group is capable of analyzing a weakness in its performance and 'fixing it fast'.

...AND SEVEN THAT LEAD TO RUIN

1. Allowing one or two people to dominate discussion.
2. No one making an effort to keep discussions on track.
3. The members not seeming to understand their common purpose.
4. People ignoring other ideas while they prepare their own submission.
5. A lack of focus on the issue means the conversation strays off the topic.
6. Allowing disagreements to become personal attacks, leading to a breakdown in unity of purpose.
7. Allowing only a simple majority vote – which can mean a substantial number may be dissatisfied.

LIGHTEN THE LOAD AND... DELEGATE

HELP FOR THE OVERWORKED COMMITTEE MEMBER

HELP FOR THE OVERWORKED COMMITTEE MEMBER

Delegation

We all say it's vital, so why don't we do it? Do you hesitate to delegate for any of the following reasons?

- "If you want something done right, do it yourself."
- "There are too many problems in getting others to do it – might as well do it myself."
- "I don't like palming off the dirty work to others."
- "I don't like fronting up to people if they mess up a job I've given them."
- "I don't want to appear bossy."
- "I like doing some things myself – I reckon I've earned the chance for recognition."
- "It takes too long to explain how to do it. I just want to get on and do the job."
- "I think you're weak if you have to get others to do the job."

Does delegation sometimes fail? Of course – and it's usually when we don't prepare properly.

DELEGATION = PROPER PREPARATION

Here are steps you can follow to ensure that you prepare thoroughly before delegating:

STEP 1

What precise job (or part of a job) do you want done? Define it clearly (ideally, write it down).

STEP 2

What outcomes or results do you want? Identify them accurately.

STEP 3

Pick the right person for the job. Consider the following:

- Has the person got time?
- Has the person got ability? (Go back to the job description and see what kind of person is needed).
- Can you appeal to the person's self-interest?
- Can you identify a challenge for the person?
- Can the person work with the rest of your team?

STEP 4

Having picked the right person:

- Explain the job clearly, avoiding torrents of words!
- Don't underestimate the size of the job or, even worse, give the impression that it's not important.
- Check carefully that the person has understood you. This requires tact but it is essential.

STEP 5

Wrap up the agreement:

- Agree on the time for finishing all and/or each part of the job.
- Discuss and agree on the outcomes of the job.
- Find out if the person needs resources or help of any kind.

STEP 6

Keep your eyes open!

- Don't be a nag – but take a keen interest in progress, ask precise questions.

STEP 7

Review and reward!

- Look at the successes and shortfalls.
- Identify the causes of the shortfalls. (Perhaps you didn't delegate thoroughly!)
- Try to give recognition – no matter how small.

TAKING THE LEAD

A GUIDE FOR CLUB PRESIDENTS

The president is the principal leader of the organization and has overall responsibility for the organization's administration. The president should set the overall annual committee agenda (consistent with the views of members), help the committee prioritize its goals and then try to keep the committee on track by working within that overall framework.

The committee members should have a sense of what they are trying to achieve throughout the year rather than just "muddling through" from one committee meeting to the next. This could be achieved by holding a brief planning session at the first meeting of a new committee.

At the operational level, a major function of the president is to facilitate effective management of committee meetings.

The president/chairperson should:

- Be well informed of all organization activities
- Be aware of the future directions and plans of members;
- Have a good working knowledge of the constitution, rules and the duties of all office bearers and subcommittees;
- Manage committee and/or executive meetings;
- Manage the annual general meeting;
- Represent the organization at local, regional, state and national levels;
- Be a supportive leader for all organizations members
- Act as a facilitator for organization activities
- Ensure the planning and budgeting for the future is carried out in accordance with the wishes of the members.

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

The president has the responsibility to determine what particular decision making process should be used. Because of the nature of the position, there is often the need for the chairperson to make informed decisions. The most difficult part of making a decision is the possibility of making the wrong one. To avoid making a wrong decision or not making one at all, the president must:

BE DECISIVE

1. Decide on small matters promptly;
2. Make decisions with firmness;
3. Explore all alternatives and encourage input from all committee members; and
4. Act upon the chosen decision.

To be an effective president, always remember to be fair and decisive. All the skills necessary to be a good president, to enable fair decision making and to exercise sound management, come with practice and regular self-appraisal.

Assess yourself regularly - Are you able to: **LISTEN?**

Lead without controlling?

Involve club or group members in decisions that affect them?

Stimulate balanced discussion?

Time meetings to finish on time?

Encourage focused discussion and keep meetings on track?
Negotiate successfully between members?

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

A GUIDE FOR CLUB TREASURERS

This resource is designed to help incoming treasurers understand their responsibilities.

Small club or group accounts are not complicated so you don't have to be an accountant to be a treasurer!

Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer is required to:

- Ensure that adequate accounts and records exist regarding the organization's financial transactions including accurate and up-to-date records of all income and expenditure
- Coordinate the preparation of a budget and monitor it carefully
- Issue receipts and promptly deposit all monies received in the organization's bank account
- Make all approved payments and invoice groups/members promptly
- Act as the signatory to the organization's bank accounts, cheque accounts, investments and loan facilities (with at least one other management committee member)
- Manage the organization's cash flow and be accountable for the organization's petty cash
- Prepare and present regular financial statements to the committee at meetings
- Negotiate with banks for overdraft facilities, mortgages and other loan facilities where required by the committee
- Regularly file business activity statements (including GST) with the relevant authorities, where applicable
- Prepare financial accounts for an annual audit, and provide the auditor with information as required; and
- Prepare an annual financial report.

Holding the money

The treasurer is responsible for the safety of the money received by the organization and for banking receipts as soon as possible so the club or group gets maximum benefit from any deposit or investment.

A treasurer, as custodian for the resources of the club/group, should also budget carefully to ensure there is always sufficient cash at the bank to cover cheques.

Taxation Issues

The Treasurer should ensure they seek appropriate advice on taxation regulations.

Assets and liabilities

Assets can be described as "items which will be of benefit in the future". Some organizations will require the treasurer to retain a record of assets and depreciation of those assets. A liability register may also be required so that the club or group knows quickly what its future commitments are.

Sponsorship

While it may be the task of others to arrange sponsorship, some clubs or groups will make it the treasurer's duty to maintain a sponsorship register containing all relevant details of sponsorship. This keeps the club or group on track regarding the sponsor's entitlements and the club's or group's delivery of what has been agreed on.

Making things easy

The treasurer should make sure – for the sake of the club or group and its members – that the organisation's financial affairs are kept as simple as possible. He or she should be able to:

- Give members and elected office bearers information they need when they need it

- Give the committee appropriate financial information to enable rational decisions to be made on behalf of members;
- Report on the effects of any decision on the financial progress of club/group
- Satisfy members, through the auditor's report, that their funds have been managed honestly and effectively.

TOP TEN TIPS FOR CLUB TREASURER'S:

1. Issue receipts for all money received.
2. Promptly bank all money received.
3. Seek out the safest and most productive place to bank the organization's cash.
4. Do not pay out any money without the authority of the committee.
5. Do not issue petty cash without receiving a voucher.
6. Clearly distinguish between capital, revenue and expenditure.
7. Record receipts and payments clearly and accurately.
8. Make sure that the balance shown on the bank statements can be reconciled to the balance in the cashbook.
9. Report the past, present and future financial progress and position of the organization to all committee meetings and the AGM.
10. Faithfully discharge your responsibilities to the committee of the organization, its members, its sponsors and others with whom it does business.

THE KEY TO EFFICIENCY

THE CLUB SECRETARY

As the secretary you are a key officer of your organization

The smooth running of the organization depends on the efficiency with which you handle the records, correspondence and other communications. Experienced secretaries will tell you that their duties often expand beyond what is normally expected of the secretary. You may be a new secretary and “feeling your way” or an experienced secretary and want to review your role. Secretarial jobs differ but there are many common aspects. This brochure lists many of the duties expected of a club or group secretary.

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

CORRESPONDENCE

You should read and reply to correspondence promptly even if only to acknowledge receiving the letter and pass it onto the relevant person in your organization. File carefully, preferably in categories to which you can refer easily. As well as this file, some secretaries maintain a register of correspondence “in” and “out”. Whatever system you use, you should try to achieve two things: answer letters quickly; and be on top of all correspondence. Failure to answer letters punctually and not knowing where to find letters in a file are two of the major mistakes made by inexperienced secretaries. In some cases these mistakes can cost your organization money.

REPORTS

Write the annual report and other reports as required. Encourage subcommittees to present brief, written reports at meetings and file these. Written reports save time at meetings and make your job easier.

RECORDS

Maintain a register of members, life members, sponsors (if required); maintain all legal documents such as constitutions, leases and titles. This means recording changes and alerting the committee when renewals fall due or when a legal deadline must be met.

EXTERNAL LIAISON

These are some duties you may be called on to carry out:

With other agencies — act as the public officer of your club or group or in the absence of a formal public relations officer, project a favourable image and seek support from the public, business circles and the media; liaise with officials, coaches, clubs, affiliated bodies, government agencies and committees.

With associations — process transfer applications; enter teams in competitions; represent your organization at association meetings; obtain association sanction for club or group events; communicate information between association and club or group members, such as event deadlines.

General affairs - keep a register of members' names and addresses; handle bookings and entries; supervise uniforms; respond to general duties as directed by the Executive Committee; maintain a register of sponsors.

PLANNER

Secretaries use various methods for planning their “administrative year”. One method involves the secretary and president (and committee) developing an annual planner which lists the key events and tasks that require action. This planner will help the committee “get on top” of a lot of administration, lighten the secretary's load and keep your members happy.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SECRETARY

An effective secretary will be:

METHODICAL

- Get a filing cabinet, chest of drawers or special box! Buy a box of manilla folders – one for every project/topic. It'll be money well spent!
- Draw up an annual calendar/chart and mark in all key dates: meetings; carnivals; association deadlines; holidays. This will give you an overview of what is coming up.

PERSISTENT

The good secretary is a bit like a sheep dog. You have to keep rounding up those who've been given jobs to do! And, like a sheep dog, in some cases you may just have to point the way; in others, you have to "snap at their heels"!

IMPARTIAL

If you're committed to serving the members you won't get involved in cliques, internal power plays or politics.

CONSTITUTIONALLY ALERT

Like all committee members, you must be thoroughly alert to the legal and constitutional requirements of your organization. You should have your copy of the constitution and rules always on hand to ensure that your committee is always acting appropriately. It's also important to have your annual chart drawn up. It will help you to identify legal and/or constitutional deadlines and ensure that your committee meets its legal obligations.

DUTIES FOR MEETINGS

Notice of meetings must be sent in accordance with rules. If no rules exist, your notification must ensure that all members know about the meeting. If all those entitled to be at the meeting aren't given proper notice, there's a risk that the decisions of a meeting could be invalid. Even those who say they are not able to attend should receive official notice. The notice must mention:

- o TIME
- o DATE
- o PLACE OF INTENDED MEETING
- o NATURE OF BUSINESS
- o WHETHER IT IS AN ORDINARY OR EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Rules may prescribe that notices sent out by the secretary contain notice of certain resolutions.

The Secretary must observe the length of time governing the sending out of notices. If there is not a club or group rule on length of notice, then reasonable notice must be given. And, if you're sending out notices by post, it is your responsibility to allow for time taken in the mail so that the required notice is given to members. The secretary should also check whether rules oblige the organization to advertise meetings in advance in the newspaper.

The secretary should arrange the meeting place and admission to the meeting, prepare an agenda, record minutes and keep the chairperson informed of any matter which may assist or invalidate proceedings.

THE AGENDA

The chairperson and secretary should be familiar with the agenda. In fact, they should plan it together.

THE MINUTES

It is essential to have a correct record of the proceedings of a meeting which is why minutes are kept. These serve a varied role – they are both a general record and an attendance record and, in case of later doubt or dispute, they're a legally acceptable reference and guide.

THE MINUTE BOOK

The minute book is a legal record of a committee's decisions. You must maintain the minutes written (or pasted) in the book, which should have serially numbered pages.

STYLE

It's essential when writing minutes that the secretary use clear, simple language accurately and without ambiguity. The minutes should be dictated or written up quickly before the memory fades. Just in case, keep notes made at the time until the minutes have been confirmed at the next meeting. Use the past tense when writing minutes and define points of agreement and disagreement. Try to reflect a logical sequence when reporting the series of events which might have surrounded discussion on a topic or led up to a motion about it.

MOTIONS

With important motions include the names of both mover and seconder. For minor motions, use a simple statement such as: "It was resolved that...", "It was agreed that...", "Council resolved to...". Avoid recording expressions of a general nature that will bind future meetings and ensure when recording motions, particularly difficult ones, that you understand them fully. If you don't understand a motion, quickly ask the chairperson to have the motion repeated.

ACTIONS

It is essential that your minutes have an "action column" which lists the names of those responsible for following up the committee's decision. The secretary should also write letters as the meeting has instructed they should be written. You, as secretary, may have to push this point at meetings – otherwise you may be expected to do everything! But don't let decisions pass without linking them to a person.

NUMBERING

Some secretaries number resolutions and maintain a "Register of Resolutions". This is an effective way of ensuring that the committee keeps on top of its decisions and is seen to be efficient and reliable.

CIRCULATING THE MINUTES

Where possible, the minutes should be circulated before the meeting. Try to avoid reading the minutes in full – it kills the meeting right at the start! If you can't circulate the minutes beforehand, read only the essential parts (i.e. the decisions), unless the members request they be read in full.

CONFIRMING THE MINUTES

If you have circulated the minutes before the meeting, the members vote: "That the minutes as circulated be taken as read and confirmed as a true record". This gives the members the chance to discuss the accuracy of the minutes as a record. If they are not satisfied, they can agree to amend them and the change should be clearly written in. The members must not, at this time, reopen discussion on the decisions taken at the previous meeting. They are voting only on the accuracy of the record. If the decisions taken were inappropriate (even silly!), they have to stay on record and be rescinded, or amended, at the proper time

in the meeting. The secretary has should enlist the help of the chairperson to prevent the "meeting nitpicker" from wasting time looking for trivialities in the minutes.

REPORTS

Many secretaries (and committee members) complain about “wasted time”, “waffle”, “going round in circles”.

If you want to reduce this then try (and keep trying!) to get members to present written reports – with suggestions, proposals or firm recommendations. It doesn't matter if they're only hand-written but it's a guaranteed way of being business-like and saving time. In this respect, you and the president may have to lead from the front.

Top Ten Tips for Club Secretaries:

1. Prepare an agenda, with your chairperson, for every meeting.
2. Make sure committee members are aware of the time and place of the meeting and ensure the chairperson starts on time.
3. Do not read the minutes of the last meeting in full (unless members require it).
4. Do not attempt to take detailed notes of discussions.
5. Record all resolutions taken exactly as passed by the members and ask the chairperson to repeat the words of the motion if you are unsure.
6. Ensure that you record the names of the people responsible for following up a resolution, since failure to do so will result in you, the secretary, doing everything!
7. Do not volunteer. Nominate committee members to assist. That's what they're there for.
8. Do not become too involved in debated discussion. If you feel you want to have close involvement in a topic, ask for someone else to take the minutes for that item.
9. Encourage members to put in written (even hand-written) reports to cut the waffle and help you in your duties.
10. Remember that all committee members, especially the secretary, must help the chairperson run a friendly, fair and effective meeting.

YOU HAVE THE ANSWERS

SOLVING CLUB PROBLEMS

If your problem-solving meetings often get off on the wrong foot — and end with no benefit to your club/group — then this resource is for you.

There are three easy ways these problem solving meetings can be conducted, by: brainstorming, discussion group, or a working group. Though these meetings may not be formally chaired, leadership is essential if they are to achieve the results you want.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is quite different from the formal debate of business meetings. It is used to search for as many ideas as possible – quantity before quality.

What it achieves

Brainstorming is simply getting the greatest number of ideas from a group of people in a short time. It encourages everybody to contribute ideas uninhibited by formality. Participants can put forward unusual proposals for initiatives or problem solving without the fear of ridicule or embarrassment. Quite often, worthwhile ideas surface in such a relaxed forum where they would not in a more formal environment.

How it works

As many ideas as possible are recorded – NOT debated. Display the ideas put forward. Ideas that are not clear to the group should be clarified. Ask the group to do this, not just the person who put the idea forward.

The leader's role

Leaders must be enthusiastic about brainstorming and the positive results it may generate. They should be prepared to share enthusiasm, be able to generate noise, laughter and offbeat ideas, while not imposing their own views. They must be able to write quickly and clearly as the ideas flow or alternatively a scribe may be appointed, and they should be uninhibited and accept and record all ideas.

STEPS TO FOLLOW FOR SUCCESSFUL BRAINSTORMING:

1. State the Topic
2. Outline the Rules
 - Concise statements are required (6–8 words)
 - No discussion or debate, apart from clarification of ideas
 - All ideas are written, so all members can see their contributions
 - Strict time limit is stated
3. Start
 - Facilitator invites members to put forward ideas
 - Don't push at the start
 - Encourage and praise contributors
 - Be aware of repetition
 - Don't allow debate at this stage.
4. Stop
 - Finish on “an upbeat”
 - Don't drag it out
5. Getting Consensus
 - There are many approaches, for example:
 - Put the members into small groups and ask each group to select its four priorities.
 - Vote by a show of hands to select priorities
6. Summary

- Clearly write up the group's final consensus in words they agree to. If a specific action is proposed, identify a person to follow it up and when.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Discussion group meetings differ from formal business meetings in the way they are conducted and what they achieve. They are in fact "ideas" meetings in which high levels of motivation are maintained. Special care must be taken to see that the problem, and not any individual, is tackled. Formal debate is not used to reach decisions.

What they achieve

- Involvement by your members
- A sharing of ideas
- Identification of specific club or group issues
- A free flow of thoughts
- Members' pleasure in contributing
- Better understanding of club or group problems
- New approaches to club or group projects
- Enjoyment of a firm "closure"

How they are run

The meeting is structured so there is continual focus on the problem or problems you are there to solve. It is important to: identify specific problems, maintain a high level of motivation, ensure that the problem is tackled. Participants should emerge with a better understanding of issues within the organization.

The leader's role

As in all meetings, the leader's role is crucial. He or she must pick a group with the skills and ability to work together to reach a solution. The leader is a contributor and records and reports ideas. An effective leader/coordinator must be able to move the group towards action. Discussion groups will not be effective if you don't have the right leader.

WORKING GROUPS

Working groups find solutions to problems and then set about implementing them. Not as free-ranging as brainstorming sessions, nor as ideas-driven as discussion group meetings, they achieve measurable results.

Participants take an issue or problem, examine it, provide a written answer, which is discussed, voted on and then – if appropriate – acted upon.

What they achieve

- Provide the opportunity to explore any issue fully and establish the mechanism to deal with it.
- Involve each and every member of the group in providing an answer, without pressure.
- Overcome the common hurdle of dominant, vocal group members inhibiting the contributions of others.
- Emerge with a firm action to be followed

How they are run

Up to nine people are chosen to form the working group – try and keep the group small (under 10). The leader identifies the issue or problem in a single sentence on a whiteboard, blackboard or easel. Each member records his or her solution/s on notepaper. The working group reports in rotation and solutions are written on the so everyone can see. Potential solutions are then discussed, put forward for preliminary vote, clarified with further discussion if necessary, voted on again and accepted as a point for necessary action.

The leader's role

Plan the meeting and have the ability to involve all the participants. Use communication skills to draw discussion to a "closure". He or she will structure the meeting so it can focus on key issues and engage in creative problem solving.

MARKETING AND PROMOTING YOUR CLUB

What is Marketing?

Marketing can be defined as a process by which individuals and groups obtain what they want through creating, offering and exchanging products of value with others.

All sport and recreation organizations undertake marketing, although they are often unaware that they are actually doing so. Listing your club in the yellow pages telephone directory, placing information about membership registrations in the local newspaper or leisure guide, or decorating the club facilities are all examples of **formal marketing** activities.

An example of **informal marketing** involves a person enquiring about joining a synchronized swimming club and the secretary being particularly helpful with providing the membership information over the phone.

WHO DOES MARKETING?

These examples of marketing indicate that different individuals within your sport and recreation club or group conduct marketing activities. It is particularly useful to appoint an individual or small team as marketing officers to oversee the development and implementation of your organization's marketing strategies.

MARKETING TOOLS

The "marketing mix" or tools an organization can use can be classified into four categories (the 4 P's):

Product – includes the quality and accessibility of the services the club or group provides, for example, competitive and recreational programs, competitions and social functions.

Price – includes the cost of membership fees and discounts offered.

Place – includes the facilities where practice or competitions are conducted.

Promotion – includes advertising of the club or group, a promotion at the local shopping centre or an article in the local community newspaper.

DEVELOPING A SIMPLE MARKETING PLAN

A marketing plan does not need to be particularly difficult to develop or the strategies costly to implement. There are many different ways to develop a marketing plan. A simple plan for a small club would contain some basic elements including:

Objectives: Marketing objectives should be specific, measurable and achievable. An example would be recruiting an additional 10 recreational members by the start of the season.

Strategies: These can be developed around the marketing mix and must be targeted towards the specific target markets. **Target marketing** is the practice of designing and directing specific services at specific individuals or groups of customers. For example, if your club was trying to attract new recreational members you would need to develop strategies to specifically attract that group.

Budget: A realistic marketing budget within the club's/group's capabilities and focusing on low-cost or no-cost strategies would be recommended.

Evaluation: Make sure strategies are put in place to see if you have met your objectives. Some activities are easy to monitor, such as a membership drive, others will not be able to be evaluated until after the event. Collect copies of press clippings or media coverage, records of attendances at functions or competitions and any feedback your group receives whether it's positive or negative.

EXAMPLE MARKETING PLAN FOR A “TRY SYNCHRO” OPEN PRACTICE DAY

Marketing objective: To recruit 20 recreational swimmers by December 10th

Marketing Strategies	Cost of Strategies
Arrange date and time of Free – “Try Synchro” Open Practice Day	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange activities/games at Open Practice Day: • free coaching • games/activities • information desk (need welcoming volunteer and forms to record names/phone numbers of those attended) • BBQ (need volunteers) 	Burgers & Hot Dogs - \$50 Buns - \$25 Condiments - \$10
Develop a flyer advertising Open Practice Day	Coloured paper - \$10 Photocopying costs - \$10
Place flyer on local community notice boards including local shopping centres, library, swimming pool, etc . . .	
Place information in the club newsletter offering a free drink for those who bring a friend who is not a member to the open day.	Drinks - \$25
Write an article and provide a photo for the local newspaper focusing on swimmers who joined up at an open day and are now part of the Club	
Consider signage – banner to be placed outside pool on main street – Make signs about open day	Signs - \$50
Conduct Free open practice day	
Follow up those who attended but did not join up on the day	
Total cost =	\$180

Actual memberships gained:

15 new members each @ \$75 recruited = \$1,125

Net profit for club \$1,125 – \$180.00 = \$945

DEVELOPING A DETAILED MARKETING PLAN

A detailed marketing plan for a larger club or association would need to include further information such as a:

Situational analysis – This contains information on the organisation, an analysis of the customers, a description of the services currently being offered, an analysis of the competition and the external environment.

Opportunity analysis – This section utilizes the information from the situation analysis and identifies opportunities that need to be addressed.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA TO PROMOTE YOUR CLUB

Focusing on the marketing tool of promotion and one aspect that many people lack confidence in is working with the media.

HOW TO WRITE A MEDIA RELEASE

Your club or group can communicate with the media by alerting the media to a forthcoming event, such as a media release about an event, which is to take place or has taken place, such as a competition.

When producing a media release:

- As a general rule, give the person’s title first, followed by the name (Club President, Joe Smith)
- Have photographs available (with proper permission) or present opportunities for photographs.

- Put the name of your club at the top of the release, and "media release" should be prominently displayed.
- Supply name, address and telephone number of a club person to contact for further information.
- A good media release will answer six questions concerning the event. Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SYNCHRO SWIM ONTARIO TO HOST 2004 SYNCHRO NATIONALS

Toronto, Ontario - August 8, 2003

Synchro Swim Ontario is pleased to announce that Ontario will be the host of the 2004 Canadian National Synchronized Swimming Championships.

Athletes from across Canada will compete for National titles in Solo, Duet and Team events May 3-8, 2004 in Toronto, Ontario at the Etobicoke Olympium.

The 2004 Canadian Olympic Synchronized Swimming Team will also be showcasing their Olympic routines at the National Championships as they prepare to compete at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.

"I'm very excited about the opportunity to host Nationals in Ontario next year" remarked Synchro Swim Ontario President and the 2004 Nationals Meet Manager Lynn Hammond. It's a great honour to host such a high caliber meet involving exceptional Canadian athletes as we continue to prepare for the Olympics in 2004. We are well on our way in the planning of the National Meet, as we have a great group of dedicated volunteers already working behind the scenes. We plan to ensure that this is an event that Ontario will be proud of, and one that will inspire participants as well as our young athletes."

Synchro Ontario Executive Director Leslie Makins also states, "Ontario is very pleased to be hosting the National Championships next May. Elite synchronized swimmers from throughout Canada will be competing just prior to the Olympics, which will create a unique environment for this National event. In addition, we are eager to further promote our sport and increase our presence within the sporting community."

For more information about the 2004 Canadian National Synchronized Swimming Championships please visit www.synchroontario.com, or e-mail nationals2004@osrc.com.

Contact Information:

Kara Heald
 Sport Development Coordinator
 Synchro Swim Ontario
 (416) 426-7110
kheald@osrc.com
www.synchroontario.com

SYNCHRO SWIM ONTARIO 1185 EGLINTON AVE. E., SUITE 303, TORONTO, ON M3C 3C6 P: (416) 426-7110 F: (416) 426-7376