



# CLUB DEVELOPMENT

## Designing a Club Development Plan

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Synchronized swimming club in Ontario provide people with opportunities to participate in sport as athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers. An important key to maximizing resources and opportunity is to develop a club development plan. A development plan can help plan for the future, and assist clubs in achieving success. Having a plan in place, will assist in maintaining good organization, promote good-practice, and put a club in a better position to apply for grants and funding.

### **Planning the Club Development Plan:**

Good planning and consultation at all levels is the basis for the achievement of agreed objectives. The process of writing a development plan should include:

- Reviewing and affirming the goals for the club (long term and short term)
- Reviewing current policies
- Identifying external influences (Synchro Ontario, Synchro Canada, City, Province)
- Evaluate existing activities in all areas
- Identify key issues
- Agree upon common objectives

A club development plan should contain the following three stages:

Stage I - Where are we now?

Stage II - Where do we want to be?

Stage III - How will we get there?

### **Stage I – Where are we now?**

Step 1: Overview of the current position of the club

- What programs is the club currently offering?
  - *Competitive, Recreational, Summer Camps, Masters, Athletes with a Disability, etc.*
- What is the programming for each?
  - *Hours of training, competitions attended, awards program (Star/Trillium), cross-training (pilates/strength/dance . . ), etc. . .*
- Are the current programs effective?
  - *Are we achieving desired results? Are the athletes content? Do we retain athletes? Do the introductory programs bring athletes into the competitive stream?*

- Evaluation of Coaching Staff
  - *Do we have enough coaches? Are they effective? Do we assist in coach training?*
- What does the club not currently provide?
- What are the club policies and practices? Are they up to date?

Step 2: SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)

- You can develop a SWOT analysis for each area of evaluation, or prepare an overall evaluation of the club’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>

**Stage II – Where do we want to be?**

Develop the objectives that want to be achieved and organize under general headings:

- **General Heading**
  - *Objectives*
- Management & Administration
  - *Create new administration positions, clarify organizational structure*
- Participation
  - *Increase participation levels in recreational and competitive programs*
- Performance and Excellence
  - *Improve current performance levels*
- Partnership
  - *Develop partnerships – other sports teams or activities for cross -training, with schools, with other clubs.*
- Competitive Programming
  - *Provide more competitive opportunities, cross-training, athlete development*
- Recreational Programming
  - *Provide opportunities for recreational swimmers to explore and experience all aspects of synchro, Recreational workshops/camps, award achievement*

- Marketing & Promotion
  - *Create a marketing plan, expand club promotions*
- Sponsorship & Funding
  - *Pursue sponsors, apply for grants, fundraising opportunities*
- Coach Training and Development
  - *Provide further training and development for coaches*
- Volunteer Development
  - *Recruiting and reward initiatives for volunteers, recruit volunteers to become involved as officials*
- Facilities and Equipment
  - *Purchase equipment needed for athlete development, replace aging equipment*

**Stage III – How will we get there?**

This stage of the club development plan contains proposals for action for the objectives outlined in stage II.

When deciding upon the proposed action it is helpful to follow the “SMART” principles:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Agreed
- Realistic
- Time-phased

The information contained in a development plan can be organized easily in a grid format containing the following headings:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action(s)</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Project Leader</b>	<b>Partners?</b>	<b>Comments</b>

Objective: Formed in Stage II

Ex) Encourage more young swimmers to join a synchro program at the club

Action: For each objective, there may be one or more specific actions you may wish to identify:

- Ex)    1. Invite a local group to the club for a free “fun with synchro” session  
           2. Have a bring a friend day for current swimmers

Performance: For each action there must be a specific measure of success – by which it can be  
 Indicator       determined whether or not the action has been achieved.

Ex)    1. Invite 2 local groups for “fun with synchro” sessions

Completion: Decide when each action must be completed by. This will act as a motivator to stick to the plan, and a measure of success.

Date

Ex) 1. Invitations to “fun with synchro” session sent by March 31, 2003, session run by June 2003.

Leader: Decide who will be responsible for each action

Partners: Make a note of other organizations that will be involved in achieving each action.

Ex) Schools, other sports teams, community organizations, etc.

Comments: Take notes about the progress, issues, problems, etc.

### **Benefits of a Club Development Plan**

Producing a club development plan takes time, energy and commitment. However, there are many benefits that a club can gain by doing so:

- Clarity of purpose and focus – so the club’s objectives are clear, achievable and reflect the views of members.
- Confidence of the success of the club’s aims and objectives.
- Communication of the club’s aims and achievements, to potential members and sponsors
- Monitoring of events and actions, to evaluate results and respond effectively
- Delegation of actions, thus spreading the responsibility for ownership of agreed objectives