

Good Club Guide for a Marketing and Press Officer

Welcome

You have either been appointed, or are considering, a role as a Marketing and Press Officer.

We wish you a fulfilling and enjoyable experience in your role. We greatly appreciate the time and commitment that you are giving to support the development of aquatics.

How this resource will help you

This resource is intended to assist you in your role by providing:

- A guide to your roles and responsibilities as a Marketing and Press Officer.
- Top tips and good practice advice from experienced volunteers.
- Useful links and information about additional learning opportunities.

Role of the Marketing and Press Officer

The Marketing and Press Officer leads and promotes club activities, ideally to increase membership, increase income and/or improve the club's image. This includes taking responsibility for the marketing plan within a club, liaising with local media and raising the profile of the club within the community. The Marketing and Press Officer should report to the Club Chairperson.

Duties of the Marketing and Press Officer

- To develop a marketing and promotions plan for the club in association with the club's strategic plan.
- To secure, where possible, a budget for the club's marketing, promotions and press activities, in association with the Treasurer, although much of this can be done without a budget.
- To develop and maintain or update the club notice board, website and social media accounts in line with Wavepower, the ASA's Safeguarding guidelines.
- To promote and publicise all aspects of the club in a positive and equitable way through the production of informative and unbiased newsletters, website updates and regular media releases.
- To report on club events both internally and externally.
- To assist in promoting non-swimming social events for the relevant members of the club as requested/approved by the management committee.
- To create and nurture relationships with local media.
- To establish links with local schools and pool providers.

Skills and qualities required

- Enthusiastic with a good knowledge of and interest in the club's activities.
- Be an excellent communicator, with good verbal, written and IT skills.
- Have good organisational skills.
- Have experience and/or an interest in marketing, promotions and/or dealing with the local media.
- Be computer literate and have a good understanding of social media and websites.

Level of commitment required

This will vary from club to club, but in general will include ongoing weekly responsibilities ranging from 1 to 2 hours, particularly in reference to liaising with local media.

Term of office

The term of office will vary from club to club. You should establish the expectations before taking on the role.

Getting started

The following sections will guide a Marketing and Press Officer through the key areas of the role description above. This resource should be read in conjunction with other ASA Good Club Guides. See further information for more details.

Marketing and promotions involves any of the following activities:

- Marketing plans/strategies.
- Advertising (TV, radio, newspapers, flyers, website, social media, events, magazines, newsletters etc).
- Promotional activities and events (“come and try” days, special events, club website and social media content, guest appearances featuring high-profile athletes or coaches, etc.).
- Media relations (press releases).

Developing a marketing strategy for your club

When developing a marketing strategy, the key areas to consider are:

Review and analysis

- Agree the club’s current situation with key staff – how many members, facilities, staffing resources, how do you operate, how much budget do you have, what works, what doesn’t?
- Previous promotional activity – how current and relevant do you look? What activity worked before, what didn’t?
- Competitors – who are your competitors or what are your competitive activities?
- Customers – what do you know about your current customers and/or members? How many swimmers do you have at the club? Can you segment them into groups? How did they find out about you? How do you currently communicate with them?

Research

Establish what your current and past club members think of your service. What aspects do they really like, what else would they like to see? Does the research flag up an idea that you can develop to give you a unique advantage? This should also be done in conjunction with the overall club development plan.

Objectives

What does the club want to achieve? Agree your goals and this will steer your promotional activity e.g. increase in membership, raise awareness, launch an open day, etc.

Product

What do you offer? Can you develop your offer based on your research? E.g. swimming teaching, coaching, squads, masters, competitive swimming, recreational swimming, synchronised swimming, diving, water polo, etc.

Packaging

How are products and services of the club packaged to suit the needs of its members (i.e. time of training, the teachers and coaches, the facilities, the opportunities for competition, club ethos/aims and aspirations, etc.)

Price

Ensure there is a clear pricing strategy in place for the club, including provision for paying teachers/coaches (if appropriate), pool hire and other costs, squad fees to participants and hardship funds to encourage participation by all.

Place

The location of your club and its facilities may impact on the activities you can offer. Consider this in your offer, e.g. is it at a venue with easy transport access, does it have full disability access, is it a new modern inviting pool or an old pool, and is it near to schools or other sporting facilities?

Promotion

Based on your insight into your target audiences, create a plan for the club to promote its activities in the most cost effective way.

Positioning

How are the services and products of the club positioned within the local community, e.g. accessible to all, quality training, cheap, expensive?

Working with the local media

There is increasing competition for the limited media coverage of sport. In preparation for a media interview, the following sections will guide in attracting, planning for, and participating in a media interview. The challenge for clubs will be ensuring all information reported is positive, upbeat and informative.

Attracting media attention

If you are attempting to attract media attention to your club, an event or to your swimmers, you will more than likely need to write and share a press release. This will inform the chosen media of your story and hopefully the media agencies will be interested enough to contact you for more information. All media releases should be succinct and include what, where, when, how and why.

Preparing for media interviews

If you are lucky enough to attract media interest for an interview, a great way to prepare is to think about the answers to the following questions:

- What is the focus of the story and what information do you want to get across? You can always ask the reporter in advance what their focus and questions will be, although be prepared for this to change and expect surprises.
- What is your key 'call to action'? What is it that you want the listener/reader to do? I.e. visit a website or attend an event. Who else is being interviewed for the story?
- Is the interview face-to-face or is it over the phone, on Skype or via email?
- If being interviewed, is it pre-recorded or live?

- If it is a print interview, can you enhance the story with photographs, (images have much more of an impact and can help to draw the reader in), and what is their deadline?
- When will it be published and will it be published in multiple forms, i.e. on a website, in a blog, in a printed magazine, on a Facebook page, etc.?

Expect a more in-depth and lengthy interview if the reporter has days rather than hours, or even minutes, to put a story together.

The media interview

The following are top tips in dealing effectively with a media interview:

- Listen to the questions.
- Ask for clarification if you need to.
- Be direct (make your point in twenty seconds or less).
- Avoid jargon (speak in terms the public can understand).
- Be confident.
- Be aware of confidentiality of certain information.
- Honesty is the best policy.
- Avoid appearing defensive.
- Remember that interviews are a good thing.
- Promote your agenda (take advantage of the interview).
- Seek advice if a story is of a sensitive nature.
- Carefully steer away from difficult questions but be aware that the reporter will ask these again in the interview when you least expect it.

Forms of media

Print (newspapers, magazines, newsletters)

Written articles may seem like less of a concern because you don't have to be videotaped or interviewed live. Although this is the case, print interviews carry their own challenges. Most interviews are audio taped and the reporter usually has more time to process the information.

Top tips for a print interview:

- Interviews generally last longer than broadcast interviews.
- Stories can be read and re-read, especially if on a website where they will stay, possibly forever!
- The stories are longer and contain more substance.
- More people can and probably will be interviewed as part of the story.
- Reporters have an angle that they will build their story around if they are not guided.

Print reporters are trained observers and will identify and build a story around your image. They may look for personal characteristics to include in the story such as "the coach appeared agitated and it was obvious that the crisis was getting to him". Be aware of the image you wish to portray and make sure you follow this.

Radio (recorded and live)

It is common for radio stations to have interviews and talk-back or call-in shows where a guest will be interviewed and listeners may be encouraged to call in and ask questions of the guest. This is a great way to both promote a situation and to promote an image of being at one with the community, etc.

It can also go very wrong if you are not very careful when answering the questions: always remember your image.

Top tips for a radio interview:

- Your interviewer/audience may be both well-educated in the sport and have an idea of the issues at hand.
- Some irrelevant and annoying questions could be asked.
- The temperament of call-ins can vary from adoring to hostile.
- Your answers can be played back many times.

Electronic (internet)

Internet chat forums, Twitter and blogs are a way for people to chat one-on one and in groups with athletes, coaches and club officials. Once again, be aware of what you say as it is in writing and can be forwarded to anyone on the net.

Websites and social media are now a massive source of information and a way for a club to promote its activities.

Television interviews are not covered within this resource but advice and assistance is available from the ASA Communications Team on 01509 640 229.

Moving on from your role

When you decide it's time to move on, it's important to think about how you will ensure that all your knowledge and experience is passed on to the person taking over from you.

Here are some suggestions to help ensure a smooth transition, and to ensure the person taking over from you has the information and resources they need:

- Try to give as much notice as you can that you are moving on, in order to allow the club to recruit or elect another Marketing and Press Officer.
- Where possible, try to build up or be part of a small team of Marketing and Press Officers in your local area in order to share workloads, ensure others can take over when you move on and are able to offer training to new volunteers.
- Assist in developing an up-to-date role description and advert for the post based on your experience, and think of any people that may be interested.
- Think about the type of information you would like to receive if you were to volunteer for this position again, and the format you would like to receive it in e.g., an e-mail, paper file, face-to-face handover meeting, shadowing at a competition, etc.
- Prepare an information pack for the new Marketing and Press Officer to assist them in their role, including a list of any outstanding work/issues, a list of key contacts and any 'top tips' that may help.
- Hand over hard copies of any files or important correspondence and pass on any electronic information by saving it on a USB stick.
- Offer to mentor the new Marketing and Press Officer for an agreed period of time.

Summary

We hope you have found this guide informative. We wish you a great experience in your role and thank you once again for all the time and commitment that you are giving to the sport.

swim21

swim21 is the ASA's quality mark for the development of effective, ethical and sustainable clubs. The opportunity to gain swim21 accreditation is available to all ASA affiliated clubs, across any of the aquatic disciplines, regardless of size or activity delivered. swim21 is about creating the best possible aquatic experience for all and raising the quality of aquatic provision across all areas. The swim21 programme enhances club management, strengthens the structures and unites the club with shared goals to ensure the best environment is available for all swimmers.

To find out more about swim21 and the associated benefits, please visit <http://www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/swim21-accreditation/>.

Equality and diversity

Is your club as inclusive as it could be? Does your club truly reflect the local demographics? Aquatic sports can and should be made accessible to everyone, to the greatest extent possible. Opening your club to everyone will aid with sustainability, add new dimensions to the club's social element, and you may even find talent, in many different forms, where you least expect it.

Read more about the ASA's commitment to equality and diversity and find further support for clubs at this link: www.swimming.org/asa/about-us/equality/.

Further information

The ASA accepts no liability for any errors or omissions in this resource. Further, whilst it is hoped that volunteers will find this resource useful, no liability arising out of its use can be accepted by the ASA or the club.

This resource is not a contract of employment and the role you undertake as a volunteer will not create an employment relationship between you and the club or the ASA.

ASA Volunteering Hub

Did you know that the ASA has a dedicated hub for volunteers? To access this hub, go to www.swimming.org/volunteering or email us at volunteering@swimming.org.

Acknowledgements

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Useful links

The ASA
www.swimming.org/asa

Marketing and Communications advice from the ASA
www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/asa-online-marketing-centre/

Sport England
www.sportengland.org

ASA
VOLUNTEER
ENGAGEMENT

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations
www.ncvo.org.uk

Sport and Recreation Alliance
www.sportandrecreation.org.uk

Volunteering England
www.volunteering.org.uk