

A11

(Criteria 6.3)

Guide to Writing a Club Newsletter

Where to start?

When writing any newsletter it is important to think about:

- Who is going to write/manage the club newsletter?
- Who is the target market?
- What are the messages the club wants to put over?
- How much money do the club have?

Newsletter Coordinator/Committee

Writing and maintaining a club newsletter can be quite a demanding job, even in a small club, as supplying constant information to the membership can be time-consuming. As with all of these jobs, it is better if a small group can be pulled together to deal with this area of work but at the very least, an 'editor' needs to be appointed. It is often better if this person has a committee position, but is not absolutely vital.

Target Market?

This may seem like a strange place to start for many of you, as your automatic response will be 'For the members of course!' However, membership groups can be split further and there are many other markets which you may wish to target:

Publicity for Sponsors	Male members
Advertising for Sponsors	Female members
Advertising for non sponsors	Coaches
Parents or other 'Friends' of the Club	Club Officials and other Volunteers
Potential new members	Junior Members

It is important to understand your market if you are to put the information you have into meaningful sections. It also helps with the graphics you may wish to insert. The target market will also influence what you call your newsletter - if you decide to name it.

What is the key purpose of your club newsletter?

You need to decide what the key purpose of the club newsletter is after you have decided who the key target market(s) are!

- Is it to give information to club members about future developments?
- Is it to keep different sections informed on what has happened in other areas of the club?
- Is it primarily a vehicle to promote your sponsors?

You probably feel all of the above suggestions are relevant but you may have to make hard decisions if you only have a small space and all your information won't fit in - **prioritisation may be your only option.**

If you look at nationally published magazines on any subject you will see that each month/week there will be certain subjects covered in the same place in the magazine in each publication.

This is helpful to readers e.g. if they know the training/competition list is always on the back page at the bottom, they can quickly find that information.

A useful size for a club newsletter is A5 (an A4 sheet of paper folded in half) but the size of your club and the money you have available will influence this decision.

A useful format is:

Front Page	Middle/Inside Pages	Back Page
Exciting News Story Contents Main Sponsor How to contact the editor Copy and Publication Dates	News from the Sections Adverts Advice Section e.g. A Training Tip	Coaches Section Good Publicity for Coaches & Other Volunteers Information on Training Courses Fixtures

How much money does the club have for a newsletter?

This will obviously guide:

- How large the publication is
- The quality of the paper, print and whether it is in colour
- The frequency of publication

Although money will guide the decisions on these issues, the purpose of the newsletter and the key target audience will also have an influence. For example, if a key purpose of the newsletter is to provide a promotional vehicle for the club and its sponsors, then you may go for less editions but a higher quality magazine. If, however, you want to give regular information to members then you will probably want to go for more frequent editions but a smaller document printed in monochrome on lower quality paper.

Final Tips

- Appoint an editor, and ensure everyone knows that they are the key contact for the newsletter.
- Make sure that the main committee of the club agrees the purpose of the newsletter - don't let it become one person's personal communication tool.
- Set and then publish deadline dates for information to be with the editor (copy dates) and publication dates at least a year in advance. This is vitally important for the sanity of your volunteer editor!
- If you have advertisers try to get the money upfront. However, some may want to see the publication before making a payment. If this is the case - send the invoice with their copy of the newsletter. Make any article/match reports short and snappy - this will be more effective in keeping the interest of the readers.
- Use fun graphics to bring the articles to life but check you are within copyright laws. You may wish to put in a comment saying that any articles or letters written by anyone other than the editor are not necessarily the views of the club or its members.
- Ensure that any advertisers are selling products or services that are appropriate to your readership.
- Do not publish anyone's personal details without their approval e.g. Phone number, address etc. This is very important!



The information contained within this guide is based on the Volunteer Investment Programme Guide #4: *Writing a Club Newsletter*.