

# A GUIDE FOR COMMUNICATIONS CO-ORDINATORS

A resource to help Communications Co-coordinators understand their responsibilities in the club.

**As the Communications Co-coordinator, you are key to the promotion and development of the club.**

Each club is different and each club will have efficient ways of communicating information to their members.

As Communications Co-coordinator, you will be the prime conduit of information from the club to the members.

As communication systems increase and become easier, the role of the Communications Coordinator will alleviate much of the burden from club secretaries.

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## **WHAT IS COMMUNICATED ?**

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

All sorts of information will arrive in the post and email inboxes of a club.

The Communications Coordinator will be required to sift through the information received by the club and distribute it to the relevant people in the most effective manner.

### **OFFICIAL CIRCULARS/BULLETINS**

SA Rugby, the ARU, local governments and other organisations will send out important information to the Communications Co-coordinator.

It will then be the responsibility of the Communications Coordinator to ensure that the club officials and members are made aware of the relevant news, deadlines, opportunities etc.

### **RECORDS**

The Communications Coordinator will need to maintain an accurate and up-to-date database of members.

Ideally, the database should also be categorised to allow for specific targeted communication. Club database categories could include :

- Committee
- Premier Grade Squad & Management
- All Players
- Social members
- Under 18's/Juniors
- Seniors and veterans
- All members
- Lapsed members
- External contacts
- Sponsors and VIP's

The database should be attached to the club's email system to allow for targeted emails.

Since it will be the responsibility of the Communications Coordinator to maintain accurate records, it may be wise for the Communications Coordinator to take on the role of membership manager; a role often performed otherwise by the secretary.

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## **HOW IS IT ALL COMMUNICATED ?**

### **NEWSLETTERS**

This is likely to be the most common and direct form of information distribution to members, especially if it is via email.

There is a big difference between a newsletter that is simple black and white text in basic paragraphs with all relevant information set-out clearly, and a newsletter which could win a design award but is either too difficult to read, full of irrelevant information (or worse, lacking relevant information), or too big in memory to email.

A good newsletter simply needs to get all relevant information to the right people in a timely and easily accessible fashion.

Match reports are often included in club newsletters, however it is more important for upcoming deadlines and announcements to appear **before** reviews of last week's match.

### **GENERAL EMAILS**

The email has made communication between organisations and their stakeholders incredibly easy.

This can be a huge benefit to a time and resource strapped club, but it also means there has been an incredible increase in irrelevant or unwanted communication.

Be thoughtful about what you are sending out to your members or correspondents.

It is also more effective to send a single notice out with five or six key points than five or six separate emails especially if this follows a committee meeting. This needs planning, however if a regular bulletin is distributed, then a running record of notices can be kept until the circular is distributed.

When sending out mass emails, list all the email addresses in the "Bcc" box not the "To" box or the "Cc" box. This prevents everyone on the list seeing every email address and can help avoid privacy and spam problems.

### **WEBSITES PART I**

As well as all the known contacts on the club's database, there are potentially millions of unknown contacts sitting at homes, offices, internet-cafes, media companies, marketing organisations and school desks.

The internet has become the single most powerful communication device and is a cheap and effective tool to get information out to existing and prospective members alike.

Whilst more about the internet will be handled below, it is critical that the Communications

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Coordinator has the skills (or access to the skills) to maintain a vibrant, informative and up-to-date website for the club.

The ARU provides access to generic, template club websites, however there is nothing stopping a club from setting up its own, independent website.

## MEDIA

Whilst state and national newspapers and magazines may not be particularly interested in local clubs (unless of course there is some disaster), local newspapers are often very keen to print short articles in their sports sections about community clubs.

The Communications Coordinator should find out from the local press the sports contact and get in touch personally. The newspaper may send out a reporter to a match, however it is more likely the Communications Coordinator will need to draft and send a media release to the paper.

To send a release that is likely to be picked up, the Communications Coordinator must find out:

- Deadlines for submitted articles
- The direct email address **and** fax number of the sports or editorial department
- Preferred format of submissions (simple text, laid out, photo options...)

Once the media release is ready to be drafted, follow these simple rules :

1. Grab the readers attention in the first sentence
2. Keep to the word limit and don't waffle
3. Keep it simple : facts, event, people and story angle (the sub-editors will make it into a good read)
4. Check facts.
5. Check facts again
6. Get permission to use quotes
7. "Quote in inverted commas," the coach said.

When its ready to send:

1. Make sure the Communications Coordinator contact details are on the release
2. Ensure the release fits on one page wherever possible
3. Email **and** fax the page to the newspaper

**ALWAYS Remember** only certain people are authorised to make public comments in a club.

Generally these are :

On behalf of a club : The President

On behalf of a team: Captain/Coach/Manager.

The Communications Co-coordinator's role is exactly that .. to coordinate the communication, not be the communication.

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## MARKETING & PROMOTION

A good Communications Coordinator will not only manage internal communication within the club but also oversee the communication to the general public, most of whom you do not know and have never met.

In order for a club to develop and attract new members, customers and supporters, it must market itself to the wider community.

The Communications Coordinator does not need to have any background in marketing, just a simple plan and a good eye and ear for ideas.

The key to marketing is to:

1. Identify the market : members, players, supporters, business partners ...
2. Identify where they are
3. Identify what they want
4. Identify how to reach them

## WEBSITES PART 2

An effective website will not only convey information to existing members but also to the outside world, a world with millions of potential members, supporters, sponsors etc.

Ensure the website appeals to the public (remember the site should be suitable for school aged children) and shows the club in a positive and welcoming fashion.

Nothing is more destructive to the effectiveness of a site than out-of-date information. The Communications Coordinator but review the website regularly and ensure it is relevant and timely.

## DIRECT MARKETING

As the custodian of the club contacts database, the Communications Coordinator is best placed to oversee direct marketing of existing contacts about fund-raising events, club functions, membership drives and club news.

## OPEN MARKETING

This can be expensive but also very effective and can include :

- Banners & signs
- Letter-box drops
- Local newspaper/radio advertising
- Presentations to local businesses
- Word of mouth
- Events, functions and carnivals
- Local council publications

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MARKETING, SEE "MARKETING YOUR CLUB" PUBLICATION**

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