

**Membership &
Marketing**



Get it rolling!

Tool 1

The MEMBERSHIP & MARKETING Approach to Bowls Growth

BOWLS
#1SPORT4LIFE
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1. WHY the new term Membership & Marketing?

The history of bowls development in South Africa has been a difficult one with much misunderstanding of the meaning of the term “development”. It has been seen by many as a means of rectifying the racial and gender imbalances within bowling structures. This incorrect understanding of the concept has hampered the very process it was trying to achieve.

All humans grow from the moment we are born - without growth and change we would die. Our sport is no different. We, and the world around us, are changing and our sport needs to change accordingly or die.

In January 2016 the Bowls SA Standing Committee tasked with Promotion and Development critically examined the progress made in recent years and the factors which have influenced that progress in certain areas or lack thereof in other areas.

Three factors were identified:

- The need to market bowls to non-bowlers as a sport of choice for all ages.
- The need to retain existing members.
- A lack of understanding at club and district level of the word “development”.

The national standing committee therefore recommended that:

- The term **Membership & Marketing** is more appropriate than Promotion and Development and should be adopted immediately as it identifies the two key factors to growth and sustainability.
- Districts and Clubs should be encouraged to adopt a **Membership & Marketing** approach to grow the sport from the bottom up.

MEMBERSHIP to remind us all that existing members’ needs must be addressed.

MARKETING to ensure that we increase both public awareness and the overall image of our sport and thereby recruit more members.

2. WHAT can districts and clubs hope to achieve?

Through support from Bowls SA National Standing Committee for Membership & Marketing (NSC M&M), Districts and Clubs can:

- a. Offer an activity that is available to all, irrespective of age, gender, racial grouping or physical capability.
- b. Offer an activity that enhances the physical, mental and social well-being of participants.
- c. Offer different levels of participation to address the individual needs of players.
- d. Increase the standard of performance across all facets of bowls through training programmes.
- e. Identify talent, develop and channel talented bowlers into proper training programmes and academies.

- f. Ensure the economic sustainability of clubs by maintaining and growing membership numbers.
- g. Ensure the future of our sport by making it fun, inclusive and credible.

3. HOW can this be achieved?

a. At CLUB Level:

1. Appoint an M&M team comprising people who have the desire to grow the sport while also focusing on the needs of current members.
2. Encourage M&M teams to actively market both the club and the sport as a whole to non-bowlers. Activities typically can include promotion / recruitment drives, open days and business leagues.
3. Recognise the different needs of members and find ways of meeting those needs. Ensure that social players have their needs met in terms of well organised tabs-in games, while offering competitive players a pathway that will allow them to achieve their goals. Support these players, making use of the talent identification programme.
4. Recognise that the youth are the future of bowls and create a well-run youth programme that is managed by child-friendly coaches and run by teachers who they have trained as assistant coaches. This structure is vital to ensure sustainability. Get buy-in from all members for this youth programme, so that it is seen a vital component of the overall activities of the club.

b. At DISTRICT Level:

1. Appoint a District Standing Committee for Membership & Marketing (DSC M&M) to support the various club M&M teams logistically.
2. Initiate and run District-level projects integrated with club objectives and assist in the implementation of National campaigns and projects generated by Bowls SA.

c. At NATIONAL Level:

1. In terms of the National Sport and Recreation Act, section 7, the government has a legal duty to develop sport, through the department of Sport & Recreation South Africa (SRSA). As a registered sport federation, Bowls SA fulfils the role of applying this practically, helped by the South African Sports Confederation & Olympic Committee (SASCOC).
2. The President and Executive of Bowls SA are the link to SRSA and SASCOC who assist in providing some of the resources needed for our Bowls Federation to grow

and flourish.

3. Bowls SA NSC M&M acts as an advisory and strategy formulating team for various campaigns and projects to enable bowls to move forward effectively within our federation's objectives. Examples are the promotion of bowls at national level and initiating campaigns for implementation at district and club levels, such as the **1Sport4Life** campaign.

4. WHO is responsible for ensuring the sustainability of bowls?

ALL MEMBERS: administrators, coaches, technical officials, green keepers, social members and players. While M&M committees at all levels are responsible for formulating strategies and initiating specific activities and interventions, every member of a club should be aware of the need to support these activities wholeheartedly. A bottom-up approach is the only logical one. While national structures can suggest and advise, clubs hold the key to sustainability.

5. WHO should marketing be aimed at?

- a. The whole family – young, middle-aged and senior citizens;
- b. Businesses;
- c. Other sport codes including administrators, coaches, technical officials and green keepers;
- d. People with disabilities;
- e. School teachers, then through them, school children;
- f. Lecturers, professors and their students from tertiary institutions;
- g. Sport science and medical practitioners including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, biokineticists and high performance specialists. These professionals will recognize the value of bowls for their patients.

6. WHEN is bowls marketed?

Marketing is an ongoing process, the benefits of which should be measurable and show progression over a period of time. The creative use of opportunities which present themselves is vital.

- a. Place weekly or monthly articles in local and community newspapers about your club, the benefits of bowls and achievements of members and teams.
- b. Take advantage of opportunities created in your community like festivals, where a family day or open day can be run as part of the festival.
- c. Official public holidays are ideal for specific target-groups, e.g. Youth Day and Women's Day.

- d. A business-league game is the ideal platform to get the players' families involved too. Invite their children to play indoor bowls or set up a mini target course. Use indoor bowls for the older children and jacks or carpet bowls for the younger ones.
- e. School holidays present coastal clubs with a great opportunity to offer visitors something to do other than just lying on the beach. A short training session followed by a short fun game is an ideal event that can be aimed at the whole family.

7. WHERE can one market bowls? (Places and platforms)

- a. Schools
- b. Tertiary institutions
- c. Libraries and community centres
- d. Other sports clubs
- e. Retirement villages
- f. Medical centres
- g. Shopping centre and mall notice boards
- h. Local and community newspapers
- i. Online on your club website
- j. On social media – Facebook is currently the best platform available

8. WHERE does one begin?

Create a plan of action:

- a. Decide on WHAT you want to achieve (the goal).
- b. Decide on your specific plan of action. Define the specific steps, resources required and the roles of each person involved.
- c. Sell your plan to the various role-players to inspire and motivate them.
- d. Ensure your required resources are readily available.
- e. Execute your plan.
- f. Evaluate the outcomes to measure the success or otherwise. Understand that marketing is a process and often different mediums or methods are required to reach your goal. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.
- g. Do not get despondent if your goals are not immediately achieved – growth is a long term process rather than an overnight quick fix!