



Australian Bridge Federation

Our Vision: Australians recognise bridge as a sport which helps build their communities.

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BRIDGE CLUB ADMINISTRATORS

MARKETING UPDATE

Sandra Mulcahy,
ABF National Marketing Officer

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1. Marketing Plan - 2014

Is your Club planning its marketing strategies for **2014**? Here are two suggestions you may wish to consider:

i. A guest speaker program

Many community groups are often on the hunt for interesting guest speakers. Why not contact various groups within your community and offer to do a presentation on '***The game of bridge***'.

Such community groups may include a:

- *Lions Club*
- *Rotary Club*
- *Retirement Village*
- *Men's Shed; or*
- *Probus Club.*

Your club may also wish to provide information sessions at any pre-retirement or self-funded retiree seminars being conducted in your area. In addition, check with the **HR** Section of any large Local, State or Commonwealth Government Department which may be located in your area to see if they would welcome a lunch-time session for their staff.

I have developed a resource kit, which can be accessed at www.abf.com.au/marketing/docs/ABF_RESOURCE_KIT.pdf, if you think this is something someone in your club could undertake. The idea is for a speaker to compile from the package a list of dot points that they could speak about. They should tailor their presentation according to the time allocation.

Please provide feedback on the information package as together we may be able to develop a powerful resource for this type of marketing activity.

Thanks go to Laura Ginnan, the Marketing and Promotions officer for the Victorian Bridge Association, for this great suggestion.

ii. Free lessons / lunch / activities offered during Seniors' Week 2014

Get involved in Seniors Week activities in your local community by advertising free lessons/ lunch / fun at your club for people 60 years of age and over.

Check the website for the dates in your State and start planning activities now!

A couple of Clubs in Western Australia are trialling this strategy at the moment.

2. What is Marketing?

For many people, the term *marketing* can be a mystery.

In the mid 20th century, marketing replaced sales as one of the main drivers of business. This shift revolutionised the way business came to be conducted. Where 'sales' placed **selling the product** at the heart and soul of a business, marketing placed the **customer** at the centre.

Marketing includes actually asking the customer (*member*) what products and /or services they want. Organisations that adopt this way of doing business are said to have a *marketing orientation*. Outcomes tend to improve as they learn to **understand** their customers (*members*) better.

How well do you know your club members?

Many Clubs tell me that they know what their members want and this may be correct. However, from a marketing perspective I would strongly encourage each club to ensure that it has a **thorough** understanding of their members' wants and needs. Strategies designed to attract new members and, perhaps more importantly, retain existing members should be **informed** by this understanding!

Avoid making **assumptions** as that can be the death of any organisation.

Try this checklist:

- Who are your current and potential members?
 - » How old are they, where do they come from?
 - » Who enrolls for your beginner classes?
 - » Why do people attend beginner classes?
 - » What gender % applies at your club?
 - » What % are novices/experienced/grand masters?
- What do you know about potential members?
 - » How often do they attend lessons?
 - » How often do they attend supervised play?
 - » How many play on-line (*and how often*)?
 - » When do they sign up for lessons? Is this seasonal?
 - » Are they influenced by promotions? If so, what works best?
 - » What is the best *communication channel* to reach them?

- » Do you evaluate your beginner courses to find out how to continually improve what is being delivered?
- How do your current members 'use' the sport?
 - » Do they refer friends/relatives to beginner classes?
 - » How many sessions do they play in one week?
 - » What % attend 'development' lessons on offer?
 - » Are they interested in red/gold points?
 - » Are they interested in travel (eg to National competitions/cruises)?
 - » How many need you to arrange partners?
 - » Are they prepared to travel to other clubs for red point events?
- What do your members think of the club environment?
 - » Do they like your scoring system (ie Bridgemate/ travellers)?
 - » Do they have any trouble with parking?
 - » Is poor table manners an issue for some?
 - » What do they think about refreshments provided?
 - » Do they consider the club to be a friendly place?
 - » Are there sufficient sessions held each week (at the right time/ day)?
 - » Do they find your Director/s friendly and competent?
 - » Are they happy with opportunities provided for upskilling?
 - » Do you have sufficient social events to meet their needs?
 - » Do they read your Club Newsletter – does content meet their needs?
- Why do people buy or not buy your product?
 - » What specifically appeals to potential members?
 - » Why do people leave your club? Do you do exit interviews?
 - » Are their needs likely to change in near future?
- What would they like more of / less of from their Club?

Capturing Intelligence about your membership

It is not always possible to gain all the information you need to understand the needs and wants of your members but I've listed below some inexpensive methods that can be used.

Method	Description	Advantages / Disadvantages
Observation	Researcher observes behaviour of people in a natural setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No direct contact ▪ Can accurately describe behaviour however does not test what caused behaviour ▪ Subject to observer bias ▪ Moderately inexpensive
Focus Groups	A group of six to ten people discusses a specific topic under the leadership of a skilled moderator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides the opportunity for in-depth exploration of a single issue ▪ Can be useful when describing entire membership ▪ Sample size extremely small ▪ Subject to moderator bias

Method	Description	Advantages / Disadvantages
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who has skills to moderate?
In-depth interviews	Allows for in-depth probing to explore motivation and attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the opportunity for in-depth exploration of a single issue Sample size usually small Interviews can be extensive and long
Surveys	Can be conducted by mail, telephone, web based, at a bridge session or in person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful to analyse and describe situations and attitudes Extremely useful describing whole membership Subject to interview bias Response rates not high (<i>traditionally</i>) Relatively inexpensive
Pilots	Trialling a new initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be suitable for examining cause and effect relationships Can assess changes in marketing mix

Successful marketing people have a deep understanding of their members – both from a current perspective and from a planning perspective.

For your information, intelligence from research work undertaken by the ABF can be accessed at <http://www.abf.com.au/abf-marketing/abf-marketing-research/>.

Research '*intelligence*' should be used to inform the design and development of all your initiatives, services and campaigns.

Maintain and grow your relationship with your members

Take a few moments and think of all the inactive members in your Club. There are many reasons a member may leave your club (*eg ill health, death etc*) but some you may also encounter include:

- 1) your table fees are too high compared to other Clubs or other interests they may have
- 2) they had an unresolved complaint; and
- 3) they left because they felt you didn't care.

The last two make up the majority of why a client or customer will no longer use services or products provided by an organisation. It basically means that people leave when they feel you don't care about them.

Many businesses spend **80%** of their marketing budget going after new customers and clients rather than nurturing, retaining and maintaining the relationships they already have.

Your marketing dollars will go further if you use them to build, nurture, and develop your membership relationships. Building these relationships just means showing your members that you

truly care about them. Logically, you will also be limited in your ability to attract new members if you can't hold onto and satisfy your existing ones.

The bottom line is that one of the key components in marketing and membership growth is to spend the majority of your time and effort nurturing relationships, so that you **get business from existing members**.

Some value-add strategies that help retain members include:

- A new members kit – as provided by the North Short Bridge Club in Sydney and the South Australian Bridge Association (*both featured in recent Marketing Updates*)
- Special offers (*eg ABF membership benefits, discounts at local stores etc*)
- A well-publicised complaints process – where complaints are dealt with speedily and effectively (*adhering to the principles of Natural Justice*)
- A Club Newsletter containing information which interests your members
- Social activities which excite and engage your members
- Being clear about your values and enforcing them – ABF research shows that one of the **major** issues confronting our sport is poor behaviour at the table (*especially towards people transitioning from 'help with play' to 'open' sessions at their club*)
- Trips away – organise a week-end away or a trip to Bali to play bridge (*or even encourage your members to participate in Regional/National competitions*).

3. 2014 Gold Point Events

Please remind your members about the Summer Festival of Bridge and the Gold Coast Congress.

Be aware that ABF research indicates members love the travel opportunities bridge provides as well as meeting new people!

The 2014 **Summer Festival of Bridge (14-26 January)** will include the following:

1. **Prize money** – *sessional prizes in all events as well as overall prizes in all events*
2. **Roaming onsite massage therapy** – *at the table (5-10 mins for \$20) as well as an onsite clinic (30 mins for \$70).*
3. **Post lunch recharge sessions (5-10 minutes) - FREE**
4. The ABF will offer the highest placed team in the **NOT** (*that has ALL members eligible to represent Australia*) a subsidy to play in the Commonwealth Games. This team will represent Australia in Glasgow, Scotland, in 2014.
5. You'll be able to book a trip to a local winery – organised by the SFOB
6. **Celebrity Speaker Program with Sartaj Hans/ Matt Mullamphy / Joan Butts and Ron Klinger**
7. Guided morning walks around areas of Lake Burley Griffin
8. Free bus trips during the day from the venue to Parliament House/ War Memorial/ National Gallery
9. Courtesy bus to take you from your hotel to/ from the venue
10. Super-novice events for people with **0-20** masterpoints
11. Welcome cocktail party for **all** novice competitors

12. **Three free** lessons for **all** novice players from the ABF National Teaching Coordinator, Joan Butts.

Check out the website at: www.summerfestivalofbridge.com

The Gold Coast Congress (**22 February – 1 March**) will include the following:

1. Prize Money - sessional and overall prizes in all events
2. Theme - **Denim and Lace** with judging on the Monday Afternoon Session
3. 5 Session Pairs – the largest matchpoint pairs in the southern hemisphere
4. Courtesy Bus x 2 to take you from your hotel to and from the venue
5. Rookie events for those with under **10** masterpoints
6. New event for Novices with **0-50** masterpoints.

Check out the website at: <http://qldbridge.com/gcc/index.php>

4. Need help?

For information or advice about your marketing needs please contact Sandra Mulcahy, ABF National Marketing Officer at marketing@abf.com.au .

HAPPY BRIDGING EVERYONE !