

AWA Club Marketing Manual

Daniel Purcell

2011



Written in Association with Fusion Sponsorship Consulting
Waterwerks Kayak Club
Alberta Whitewater Association
Alberta Slalom Canoe Kayak

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to help Alberta Whitewater Clubs in Alberta with recruitment and community awareness of the sport and its involvement in the recreation community.

This document will aid in providing structured suggestions to use and improve upon our sport awareness. It will provide a structure, which will include two advertisement and recruitment periods for summer and winter programs. The basic two period recruitment cycle allows any club to easily follow and use the guidelines.

These instructions are mere guidelines and are to be grown upon and used with flexibility to provide a wide range of variability and use across many spectrums.

Three easy to follow steps follow.

[Type text]

Step one: What does your Club Have to offer its Members?

The first step of any club is outline any and all services that it provides for its members. When someone signs up for your club membership what products and or services is he or she provided with? Make a list of all products and services.

After you have made your list of all products and or services you must now determine which product or service is offered in each of the two annual periods (as explained below)

Annual Product and Service periods

Each period is determined by the time of year and will be different for each club. The periods will be known as Summer Programs and Winter Programs

Summer Programs will consist of any programs run throughout the summer months including those from April or May until September or October.

The Winter Programs will consist of any programs run throughout the winter months including those from October or November until February or March.

Each Club will have to determine how long it would like to make its Program Cycles. Each club must take into consideration how active its club members are and determine if it is viable to either shorten the program cycles because of a small member base or lengthen the cycle period due to a large member base.

Each club must determine what products and services it is going to provide. A club should not over extend by trying to offer too many products. Stick with the motto of “less is more”. Each club should choose a few programs it has had or thinks it will have success with and stick to those, especially new clubs or relatively small clubs. We need to be very specialized and focus on a few things initially and once we do them well then we expand into a broader member base.

Each club may look like this:

Summer programs may include these things.

Adult Program

[Type text]

An adult specific program, that provides instruction on river running and basic river skills. This will include trips and lessons for adults interested in recreational paddling. The adult night should encompass a fun evening to try something new or meet up with your old paddling pals and just have a good time. It should run once or twice a week with the occasional weekend trip from late spring all the way through the fall.

Family Night

A time where the whole family can get out and try something new together or mom and dad can teach the kids all they know about paddling. Usually once a week and may include one weekend trip depending on interest.

Youth program

The parents get to come by and drop the kids off or stay and cheer them on. A youth program would run two times a week and could include several weekend trips. The kids would learn from qualified coaches on how to safely run rivers, play canoe polo, and compete in whitewater slalom. These kids are meant to feed the Alberta high performance programs and eventually the provincial and national teams in slalom, freestyle and canoe polo. The kids would learn a wide range of disciplines and compete in polo tournaments freestyle and slalom events and would do river running trips to build their knowledge and skill of paddling.

Winter Program

Pool sessions

Weekly pool sessions that would be drop in or scheduled depending on interest. The pool sessions would include

Beginner lessons

The pool is a safe warm easy place to learn basic stroke technique and paddling skill.

Rolling Sessions

Learning how to roll in the pool is much more appealing to someone who maybe just started to paddle and has the basics but still needs to learn to roll. Make these once a week and drop in is best but be sure to keep the cost low because most people are still unsure just how interested they are in perusing the sport and don't want it to break the bank.

Indoor training and events

For kids in the high performance or youth program who want to continue training and competing in the winter indoor events, races and training sessions is a great way to keep kids coming back for more in the summer.

[Type text]

Trips

Some clubs will hold enough year round interest to promote and organize trips for adults and youth to warm climate destinations such as Mexico, California and Australia.

Step Two: Getting the Message out there using marketing and advertisement tools

Every club should have

- A business card for all coaches and admin, it can be general and have one “club” phone number web page and email address because club personnel change from year to year you don’t want to have to be always changing your business cards, so just have one.
- A pamphlet every club should have a pamphlet for distribution; it can be basic and explain all the clubs services and products. These pamphlets should be distributed in paddle and outdoor shops as well as tourism and town information centers.
- A poster format should be ready to use for upcoming events.
- A press release format should be ready for events that the club is hosting. A good format to follow and reference can be found here <http://www.emailwire.com/press-release-format.php> or a free online press release template builder can be found at <http://www.canadaone.com/promote/newsrelease4.html> it has a lot of information and contact lists for news wires and for getting your message out there.
- A web page is Very important there are free easy ways to make a web page such as wordpress.com blogspot.com. Another very effective way to keep people updated especially for existing club members is to be on face book, it is free and very effective way to organize events and keep people updated on the club and its events.
- An optional promotion tool but one I would highly recommend is a promotional video for the club. You can play it at trade shows; recruitment nights put it on your web page. This gets all the club members involved with the making of it not to mention all the kids will be showing their friends and family. An example of such a video can be found here <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5HHCywcBRE>

[Type text]

Ways the club should be advertising

The use of News paper articles: get a hold of your local newspaper and often. If you send in a prewritten article they will be more than happy to put it in the paper, best of all its free. Adds in the local newspaper are also very effective but will usually cost a little bit of money.

Magazine articles and print ads

Outdoor magazines such as rapid magazine, canoe and kayak magazine, explore magazine, and many more are great ways to let people know whom you are and what you have to offer. If you can get your club in the magazine as a written piece it is a great way to advertise for free. Often you just have to send the magazine an email. If you are looking at a more permanent guarantee that people will know whom you are there is always the print add. Often a little bit of money targeted towards the right crowd goes a long way, so consider it but do your research. The magazine should be able to provide you with numbers of how many people in each demographic will be seeing your add.

Television

Is the most effective way to advertise to a wide demographic but can also be the most expensive. There are alternatives to actually producing a commercial for TV. A news piece on your club or athletes is free and often very effective, just be sure that the club is mentioned numerous times and contact info is available. Another free form of advertisement is the community broadcast of events that stations such as CTV do to promote events in the community, it is free however you must prepare a press release well in advance to be sure it gets aired.

Radio

Radio advertisement is the second most effective form to advertise to a wide demographic however, the demographic is more specific than TV so be sure to pick the correct radio station that will broadcast to your demographic of interest. Free advertisement on the radio is also very easy to do. Free community events broadcasts are a great way to get your event out there as well as a simple email to one of the dj's can also get you mentioned on air very easily.

Internet

Internet advertisement is fast becoming the best way to get your name out there. Best of all it can be the most inexpensive. Paid advertisement on face book can cost as little as 5 dollars a month. Better yet you can simply create a group on any of the social networking sites and get people to invite their friends and self promote the club and its events.

[Type text]

A great new strategy for online advertisement is to give away prizes to people who “like” your page. This creates a large following on your facebook fan page so every time you make a new event or post a large amount of potential members are seeing it. I would highly recommend performing several “like” giveaways a year to maintain and build a large fan base.

Community Promotion

You should have posters and pamphlets available at all your local paddle shops, outdoor and sports stores. Your rec centers including swimming pools, curling rinks and hockey rinks should be used to recruit and inform active people about your sport. A free demo day at the pool, a booth at the local hockey rink with some cool video and boats for kids to sit in are all ideas that have and will continue to work. Kids who are going to get involved with our sport are statistically already involved in mainstream sports such as hockey, soccer and baseball. Statistically the parents of active kids are also active so the best place to recruit people and promote your club is at other sporting events and complexes.

Sports and Leisure Shows

Get out and show off your stuff at public events. Book a booth at the next local outdoor show, RV show or anything that will create an attraction without you personally spending a lot of resources getting people to come see what you have to offer.

Step Three: Make an advertisement schedule:

The final step is for your club to decide on which advertisement is best suited to its budget, location, demographic and will yield the best results.

In order to decide on your sources of advertisement first look at your available resources to determine an advertisement and recruitment budget. Every club should have this in their budget, no matter how large or small.

Next you have to take a look at what demographic you would like to focus on. It is recommended (seen above) to focus on parents that have kids already involved in sports. You can focus on parents to both up your youth and adult numbers. Decide on one demographic to focus on for each of the program cycles (youth, adults, specific ages or school grades). Take a look at where you have had the most success as well as where you need to improve and then choose to focus on one at each cycle.

[Type text]

After choosing the advertisement avenues (TV, Radio, Internet, print) a schedule must be made to when each advertisement will go out prior to an event or program cycle.

The outline of a schedule is as follows.

TV

6 months prior to the start of any major event or program you should have a press release to all TV stations that you are going to use. The community events calendar can be reduced to 5 weeks prior. They will not air right away but you should inform them 6 months ahead and again 4 weeks prior to the start of the event or program.

Radio

4 weeks of notice should be given prior to event or program start and then again 2 weeks prior to the event.

Magazines

8 weeks prior to the event, given that the magazine has a monthly circulation. The article will be present in the magazine the month before the event or program starts.

Newspaper

4 weeks prior to the event should be given and then again 1 week prior to the event or program starting. Two or three articles all at different points in time will be produced to promote the event or program.

Internet

4 months prior for any major event and again at 6 weeks and again 2 weeks prior. A press release should be updated to remind people so they don't forget about the event or program starting.

Your club Advertisement schedule may look like this

Summer Program

Your summer program starts in late May.

[Type text]

Internet

All possible Internet advertisement, including free community web pages, paid advertisement and your own web page will be posted in February with updates in March as well as May Prior to the event.

Magazines

In March, magazines should be contacted and articles submitted for print in April.

TV and Radio

TV and radio should be notified in late April and again in early May for the community calendar announcements.

Newspaper

Should be contacted at the beginning of May and then again in mid May for article submissions.

Community advertisement

In mid April the first of posters and pamphlets should be present in all community areas suitable for attracting new members. The posters and pamphlets should again be updated mid May for one last push to gain attention.

After you have put together your plan of attack you must also make sure to keep your members from the previous year aware that the new season is approaching. Emailing and contact lists should be kept readily available for use in such purposes.

Recommended Updates to Marketing plan to be completed.

The design and production of templates for the use of advertisement should be professionally developed by the AWA for club use. (Each club should also have an updated logo designed)

- Business card template
- Letterhead template
- Event Poster template
- Print ad template for newspaper and magazine

[Type text]

- A Pamphlet template
- Event waiver template
- Event registration template
- Event poster template
- Press release template

Media Contact list

Calgary Herald

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/about-calgary-herald/contactus.html>

Calgary Sun

<http://calgarysun.com/contactus.shtml>

TV

Global TV

<http://www.globaltv.com/globaltv/info/contactus.html>

CTV

<http://calgary.ctv.ca/contactUs/>

CBC

<http://www.cbc.ca/contact/>

Magazines

Rapid

https://www.rapidmedia.com/contact_info/editorial_department.php

Explore

<http://explore-mag.com/feedback/contact/>

[Type text]

