



GYMnastics
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CANADA

The Business of Gymnastics

Business Practices Manual

“Changing the Culture”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gymnastics Canada is pleased to provide the Business of Gymnastics: Business Practices Manual and other resources for gymnastics clubs. It is hoped that the material and workshops help your club enhance your business practices, and develop a practical and progressive business plan, regardless of your club's type, size, location or circumstance. The workshops also serve as an opportunity for club volunteers and staff to meet, learn, and share information about business planning.

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Your invaluable input into this evolving process is important, and I look forward to your comments.

Jean-Paul Caron, President and CEO, Gymnastics Canada

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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

Our Mission:

Gymnastics Canada, through its Provincial / Territorial members is a federation of clubs whose mission is to promote and provide positive and diverse gymnastics experiences through the advancement and delivery of comprehensive quality gymnastics programming by:

- Leading the Canadian gymnastics system
- Directing High Performance in the pursuit of international excellence
- Guiding the development of national programs at all levels

Our Vision:

As part of this mission, Gymnastics Canada aspires to ensure long term-term financial viability and effective delivery and management of the sport in Canada. The federation envisions a future where quality standards are developed and promoted to better position the Canadian brand of gymnastics. The Business of Gymnastics Program has the potential to change the operational culture of clubs, bring them closer to meet current and future challenges, and ultimately realize club goals. Long term, this means a stronger network of clubs providing quality gymnastics programming, which in turn fosters the growth and development of the sport of gymnastics in Canada.

A.1. Gymnastics as a Business Operation

Many gymnastics clubs across Canada are run by volunteer boards, which means that their limited time is focused on ensuring that the club operates as effectively as possible. The additional time needed for planning for the 'next season' is more often than not put on the back burner until the 'off season'. Prompted by the challenge of survival in the marketplace, Gymnastics Canada and its Provincial/Territorial members initiated the Business of Gymnastics Program in 2000. In 2001 the concept was presented and supported by all the Provinces. It is for these circumstances that the Business of Gymnastics exists.

The community sport and recreation system is relying on clubs to be more self sufficient, self-sustaining, and to generate more of its own operational and capital resources. This request for funding support responds to and enriches current thinking and trends in the sport and recreation field. Today, clubs can no longer operate on hope, good intentions, luck and the availability of volunteers. Sport and recreation clubs and facilities must take a business approach to the management of their operations. The community no longer has the resources to manage all the sport and recreation programs and services within the region.

Assuming good business practices are very important to the ongoing health and viability of clubs. Business practices include, for example: evaluating and maximizing programs, business

partnerships and club operational capacity; building positive volunteer and employee relations; and generating revenue through marketing current and new programs to the community or services partners.

Gymnastics Canada understands the need to change the way it does its business. More importantly, the federation must change its approach to doing business in a manner that simplifies and offers as many tools as are available to a predominantly volunteer driven industry.

A.2. The Changing World of Gymnastics: The Trends

A.2.a. Why Track Trends?

**You can't plan where you are going if you don't know where you have been.
If you don't know where you are going... Any road will get you there.**

Taking the time to review what is occurring in the club's community and beyond is essential for planning. As trends usually repeat themselves, they can paint a pretty good picture of the future! Trends are a great source to introduce new ideas, and they are an indicator of things changing.

It is important to explore and analyze how a particular trend applies to your situation and what the potential impact it may have on your club's operations. Analyzing trends helps evaluate the potential cost of going a particular direction. The risk of not paying attention to trends is that clubs could wither and die.

No club operates in a vacuum, so information about trends helps a club answer the following questions:

- What is changing?
- What is the (potential) impact of that trend upon the club?
- How can the club profit from current and emerging trends?

Trends expand your vision so you can 'see & feel' the future more clearly. Thinking about trends takes you out of your club box and allows you to see the 'forest and the trees'.

A.2.b. Gymnastics In Canada: Observations & Trends

Registration:

- Total registered membership stabilized around 150/160,000 individual members and 700 gymnastics clubs.
- There is large non-registered community basis participation.
- Significant membership has a highly desirable demographic profile.

Demographics Profiles:

- A March 2001 Ontario demographic study prepared by SCC Communication indicated that the Gymnastics family profile:
 - Had a very high average income – \$68,000
 - Had a very high percentage of home ownership – 69%
 - Were very well educated – 75% College / University educated
- Forty-five percent (45%) of households claimed they have watched gymnastics on television in the past year.
- A 1995 Ontario-based research project by Thomson Lightstone & Co indicated that one in every five households in Canada was involved in gymnastics in some way
- The average member profile is a young girl, aged 6–12, is a recreational member who comes from an educated and affluent household.
- There is a high turn around in recreational members each year, about 40/50 %, although there is no data to support this statistic.

Programming:

- Multi-discipline sport with women's artistic gymnastics is the most popular component.
- Recreational gymnastics is the largest and fastest growing segment of the sport. It represents 90% of total membership.
- The full potential of its diverse disciplines is not maximized, for example in general gymnastics and sports acrobatics.
- There is an emergence of new opportunities in the highly competitive sport environment/marketplace.
- Competitive gymnastics has the “loyal” & “passionate” members.
- There are strong grassroots programs and delivery networks.
- The sport is practiced in a safe and technically sounded environment, however it is considered high risk from an insurance perspective.
- Approximately 90 % of clubs are not-for-profit clubs governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

- Coaches are certified and remunerated.
- The number of professional coaches is decreasing with the emergence of new opportunities.
- Clubs have limited human & financial resources.
- PTOs and GCG have limited human and financial resources.

Awareness of Gymnastics

- It has limited national brand awareness and exposure.
- The business model / approach is growing, as is the sole ownership and partnership approach.
- The sport has limited international success (Olympic/World medallists).
- There is a proliferation of events, and all are after the same marketplace.
- Events are not “spectator-friendly” and not “sponsor-friendly”.
- Event attendance is low to negligible.

Clubs are funny. They keep doing the same thing and they expect different results. Successful clubs however, are committed to tracking trends and using them as a catalyst for new club activities and to implement change.

A.2.c. Related Societal Trends

Families:

- Double income and single parent families are increasing and more families are living in suburbs. The dramatic increase in single-child families will stimulate demand for programs with a social/interactive emphasis, for ‘quality time’ involving children, and an estranged or separated parent.
- Sport/recreation will have to compete with highly interactive and user-friendly computer-based leisure learning services from the education sector and the private recreation field.
- Competition from the home-based entertainment is increasing.
- Fewer parents are available to drive children to services.
- Self-employment, telecommuting and ‘electronic cottages’ are on the increase.
- Women moving into the workplace create demands for recreation that have child-care side benefits (i.e. day care, after school, professional development days, and school holidays).

Purchasing:

- The consumer is king. Supply exceeds demand. There is a huge choice of products and services, and consumers are looking for quality and value. Time is becoming more important than money. Competition for entertainment and leisure time and dollars is increasing.

- People are looking for more services for girls and young women.
- Sport/recreation programs will become more values based, for example: quality of life; and self-fulfillment and community, which change marketing approaches.
- Anticipate growth in youth leadership programs, the demand for development of volunteer leadership skills, and community contribution to leisure activities.
- The gap between rich and poor families is growing, as is the poverty rate for urban Canadian youth. Youth poverty rates are highest in Montreal, Vancouver, Halifax and Toronto.

Funding Sources:

- Disposable income for recreation is decreasing. There is an increased demand for decentralized recreation with a social emphasis and 'budget recreation' that can provide the same benefits (e.g. hockey to soccer, fitness clubs to power walking).
- Government cutbacks are making it increasingly difficult for non-profit clubs to access funding and resources, making partnerships and alliances increasing important.

A.2.d. Volunteerism

- More Canadians are retiring earlier. Retirees are a growing force and an opportunity, as many older Canadians see volunteering as a fulfilling activity. Senior volunteers (65+) tend to devote far more of their time volunteering and this makes them a highly valuable resource.
- Today's volunteers tend to be busier with their family, work and community. They demand more of the club, for example in the amount of time and effort they offer, and in their desire to have a variety of volunteer experiences.
- Fewer people are volunteering, but the number of hours is on the increase, which 'softens' the impact.
- There is more employer-supported volunteerism.

A.2.e. Technology

- The advancement and ever-increasing use of technology is changing everything in society, and it also provides access to limitless information, self-discovery and self-selection.

A.2.f. Youth

Youth In Sport & Recreation:

- Sport is still very popular with youth, however participation numbers are decreasing rapidly, especially from youth aged seven to fourteen.

- Barriers to participation, as reported by youth include: lack of time; energy; motivation; excessive cost; and illness or injury. Females report that lack of skill, lack of safe places and energy are barriers.
- Women’s hockey is growing, but there has been a significant drop-off in hockey registration in the teen years.
- Soccer registration has doubled to 600,000 since 1988. Female participation accounts for 36% of the total registration.
- Male registration for the Softball Ontario Association decreased slightly in 1997 for the first time. Female competitive numbers increased, as have male and female slo-pitch numbers.
- 40% of inactive youth aged 15–19 years reported they were not interested in sport.
- 50% of males and 35% of females are not interested in sport.

Physical Activity and Health

- The two most significant sources of enjoyment for both male and female youth are friends and music. The Internet is not far behind.
- Almost one quarter of children in the U.S. are now considered obese Three out of five children and youth aged 5–17 are not active enough for optimal growth and development. Activity levels decline from childhood to the teen years.
- Girls are less active than boys.

Structured Recreational Activities – Children 10–13 Years, 1996

Activity	Never	Less than once/ week	One or more times a week
How often played sports with a coach?	20.8	12.8	66.4
How often taken dance/ gymnastics?	59.2	13.3	27.5
How often taken art/ drama/ music lessons?	50.7	13.1	36.2
How often taken part in Guides /Scouts	60.1	13.8	26.1
Did child attend overnight camp?	28.7	71.3	
Did child attend day camp last summer?	31.0	69.0	

A.2.g. Sport Trends in Revenue Generation

- Sponsorship is flat. Times are difficult in a highly competitive environment. However, a major portion of sponsorship dollars is still invested in sport.
- Partnerships are increasing.
- Government funding in Canada has decreased, funds are more difficult to obtain, and the reporting requirements are very labour intensive.
- Special events are down.

- Advertising is up.
- Membership is stable.
- Gaming is down.
- Group rentals are up.
- Many sports are coming to gymnastics to learn specific acrobatic skills.

A.2.h. The Business Sector

- Businesses and corporations are willing to give generously to the community, but they expect a return on their investment. They have realized that collaborating with not-for-profit clubs can be a win-win situation. Improving public image, broadening the client base, and good publicity are some of the benefits from a partnership perspective. As competition for business support increases, it is essential that not-for-profit clubs change their focus and position their clubs carefully. Clubs need to present opportunities that increase, not drain corporate revenues.
- Having employees involved in voluntary activities sends a message to the community that the business sector is concerned about community issues. By supporting a community, a business builds the overall health of the community. In turn, a better business climate is established and the well being of employees and customers increases. Supporting employees who are in leadership roles in the community increases the visibility of the business, strengthens employee morale, and increases a sense of pride.

SECTION B: CLUB STRUCTURE

B.1. Choosing The Right Structure

A club's structure reflects the way it organizes itself to deliver its programs and services while achieving its goals. A structure helps a club to:

- Effectively use its human resources through an efficient division of labour;
- Create the club units needed to support its programs and services;
- Establish plans, roles and responsibilities that will enhance communication and collaboration.

A structure is more than a nice diagram with boxes, circles and lines. The structure of a club is what gives it a framework from which to successfully develop, deliver and evaluate its programs and services. There are few basic rules to follow when a club is either forming or reviewing its structure.

1. Form follows function: What you do should determine the way you set up operations.
2. The club structure should be created with a view to supporting member, participant, and customer needs.
3. The structure should carve a path that allows the club to achieve its mission, and that moves it towards its vision.
4. An effective and efficient structure should maximize all the resources applied to the club's activities.
5. A well-informed structure should enhance decision-making and problem solving, thus negating conflicts.

A successful club is also the result of effective leadership and a mature partnership between a board (often volunteer) or owner, and the staff (volunteer or paid). The challenge of governing and owning clubs has never been greater, due to economic restructuring, the onslaught of the information age, government and grant reductions, and the growing demands on volunteers.

B.2. Structural Components of a Club

Ideally each club will have defined roles and responsibilities that support one another but do not overlap. These organized structural units may include any combination of the following:

- **A Board of Directors:** They are an empowered body of persons who are ultimately accountable for, and have authority over all club activities. The governing board will legally answer for the affairs of the club. The board that is elected by the membership has restricted powers as set out in its bylaws and constitution. These responsibilities cannot be delegated, as they are the primary responsibilities of a governing board.

- **Management & Administration:** As with any club, there are management functions carried out by paid professionals or volunteers. The board develops the strategic or ‘big picture’ framework for the club, and the management (staff or volunteers) implement the plans and conduct the club operations.
- **Advisory Bodies:** Often these groups are referred to as “Advisory Councils”. Not-for-profit clubs establish a group of advisors to provide information and suggestions to the board and/or staff. As stated by the term advisory, this committee has an impact through influence and persuasion, rather than through any decision-making authority. Normally advisory groups are composed of representatives from a specific constituency.
- **Committees:** Committees provide the opportunity for members, participants, stakeholders and volunteers to play an active role in club management. Opportunities for involvement can be realized through a strong committee structure. There are various types of committees: standing committees of the board; ad hoc committees convened for specific issues; and program or management committees that play a role in overseeing a specific program or service.

B.3. Key Structural Challenges

- There are limited staff, volunteer and financial resources.
- There can be conflict between the professional coach (employee) and a parent or board member (employer).
- Reactive versus proactive boards can create issues.
- Most clubs require working boards, as the true Carver governance model seldom applies.
- Planning priorities are often neglected due to the daily task of “fighting fires”.
- Policies and procedures are rarely up to date or made accessible.

B.4. Types of Club Structures

B.4.a. Positioning Your Business

Before starting a gymnastics club, one of the most important decisions to make is what type of gymnastics business you want. In Canada, there are two basic kinds of business structures: (1) for-profit; and (2) not-for-profit. Within some structures, there may be variations such as competitive or recreational clubs. Each has its advantages and limitations. The key is to choose a structure that will best suit the type of business you want to run. It is very important that you take the time to research the implications each structure will have on your business, as well knowing the regulations and bylaws that must be followed. Eventually, clubs should

register under the Society's Act, or incorporate. There are liability and insurance considerations that must be taken into consideration.

B.4.b. For-Profit Clubs

B.4.b.i Sole Proprietorships

Sole proprietorships are the simplest form a business can take, as they generally have only two requirements:

1. A business license from your municipality;
2. Filing the name of your business with your provincial or territorial government.

Once you have secured financing, the club is fairly simple to set up. For-profit owners can write off business losses from personal income. However all liabilities (debts, taxes and legal actions) related to the business reside with the owner. Note that this liability is personal and not limited to the assets of the business as it might be for a corporation.

Many who start a gymnastics business aspire to make more money. Others have a strong desire for personal independence. Being your own boss has some advantages. It also involves high risks, but sometimes the rewards are potentially much higher. As an owner / entrepreneur, the greatest risks and responsibilities within the business rest squarely on the owner's shoulders. On paper it sounds great, however not everyone is mentally prepared and capable of running a business. The owner must have a clear understanding of the demands that will be placed on his/her life, and be ready to fall down and get up again. The disadvantages include paying taxes and at times, limited access to gaming or grants.

Should you start your own business? One must have the right combination of character, technical knowledge and financial acumen to make the business work. Hard work and not being afraid of taking risks is part of the picture, as is a willingness to adapt and learn. Expertise in gymnastics, while very helpful, is no guarantee of success. Above all else, today's successful gymnastics club business owner must be a good manager, must be capable of balancing knowledge of marketing strategies and finances, and must have technical ability.

B.4.b.ii. For-Profit Partnerships

Partnerships involve two or more persons. It differs from sole ownership in that it requires a written agreement among the partners. Partnerships are more complicated to organize and manage. Unless there is a partnership agreement to the contrary, all partners share equally in the management of the business. Each partner is an agent of the business, which means that their actions bind the business and all partners. Each partner is personally and jointly liable with the other partners for all the debts of the business while he or she is a partner. Normally, each partner has an equal right to profits.

There are usually two forms of partnership: general and limited. General partners have unlimited personal liability, while limited partners' risk is limited to the extent of their investment. In some cases, the general partner incorporates himself/herself and then presents the company as the general partner. In this way, both the general partner and the limited partner are shielded from personal liability.

B.4.c. Not-for-Profit Clubs

The purpose of the not-for-profit club is the common good of its members or the attainment of the objectives of the club, not the financial well being of its members. Clubs have members instead of shareholders and these members cannot receive any money (pecuniary gain) from the club except as salary. Nor can the activities of the club be aimed at financial gain for the members. Compare this with shareholders of profit corporations that invest for the sole purpose of receiving money from the corporation's profits in the form of dividends.

Not-for-profit clubs are the most common approach for gymnastics businesses in Canada and they require the most paper paperwork to establish and operate. Not-for-profit clubs need to be registered with the Societies Act and follow its regulations. Registered clubs are required to hold an annual general meeting to elect a board of directors that is legally liable for the actions of the club. Advantages include tax savings, easier access grants and gaming, and this structure helps to generate volunteer support. Disadvantages include a changing board that can potentially affect the direction and stability of the club, and it can be a less attractive environment for coaches to work within.

B.4.d. Types of Clubs

The type of structure a club chooses should be considered in light of the programs that the club wants to offer. This would further describe the business as a competitive or a recreational club. There are recreation only clubs, and there are those that have competitive and recreational components.

A good competitive team program can lead to heightened exposure in the community and result in more opportunities for revenue generation and partnership. The presence of a coach takes the commitment of athletes and the club's management to a higher level, and this too can create many positive spin-offs. Running a competitive club can be a more expensive undertaking than a recreational club. Wages, training, competition expenses, equipment, and insurance are examples of these added costs.

B.5. Key Components of Club Structure

Club structure is usually framed by:

- i. The role, authority and relationship of the staff (paid or volunteer) with a governance body (i.e. a board of directors)
- ii. A strategic/business plan
- iii. Club policies and procedures

B.5.a. Key Component # 1: Board of Directors

Regardless of the structure, most clubs have a governing board of some description.

Definition:

Governing boards (Carver) can be defined as: “ An empowered body of persons, charged before the law, and ultimately accountable for and authority over club activities.” In addition, the board has restricted power as set out in its bylaws and constitution. **The governing board will legally answer for the affairs of the club. This cannot be delegated; this is the primary responsibility of a governing board.**

General Approach of Not-for-Profit Clubs:

A board of directors manages the not-for-profit club. The board is usually elected and report annually to a general members meeting (AGM). Usually, it is the board that hires the staff (Head Coach, Executive Director or Administrator). In a standard model, the board develops the strategic framework for the club and the staff carry out all operational duties. In most gymnastics clubs, the board members are also required to sit on working committees.

Memberships can be accepted by approval of the board or by the Secretary if there is a separate list of membership criteria. There might be different types or classes of members, for example voting and non-voting. Membership may or may not entail fees or dues.

Governing boards are ultimately responsible for:

- Determining the club vision, mission, values and operating guidelines, its strategic priorities, whom it should serve, and what services it should provide;
- Establishing the policies (rules and regulations) and the procedures needed to structure and direct the work of the club;
- Monitoring operations and evaluating results;
- Securing and monitoring effective management of the organization’s financial resources;
- Providing continuity for the ongoing governance and management of the club;
- Providing continuity by protecting the assets of the club;
- Fulfilling the basic legal and ethical responsibilities of a board.

There are a few challenging characteristics of the not-for-profit club that create most conflicts.

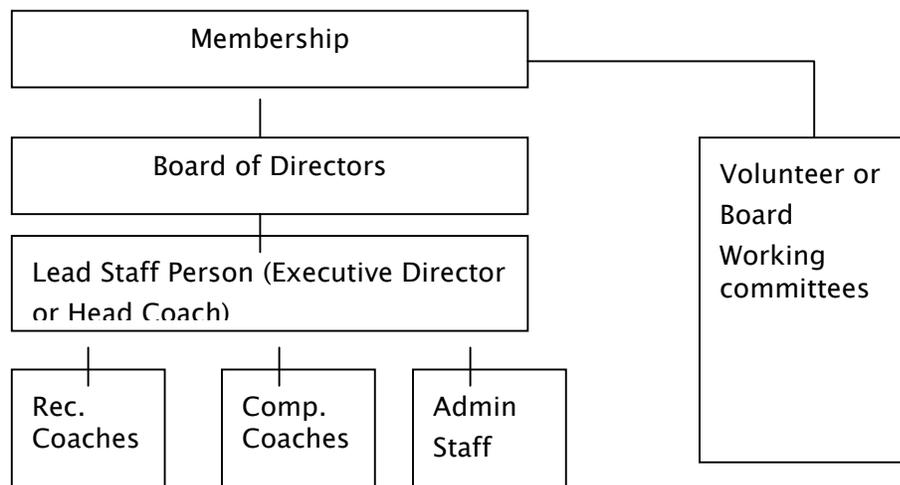
- Board members may have limited gymnastics knowledge yet they supervise the “gymnastics expert”.

- The coach provides gymnastics leadership according to the goals outlined by the board, and has direct impact on the children he/she supervises. The coach depends on the board for the financial stability of the club, but programs are a critical component to that stability. Coaches may not possess strong business or administrative skills.
- Parents (as a member of the board or a working committee) want the best for their child as an individual, yet they may not appreciate the difference between program and individual needs.
- At times working committees or coaches may feel it is their right to make a decision or policy on a controversial issue.

Sample Club Structures

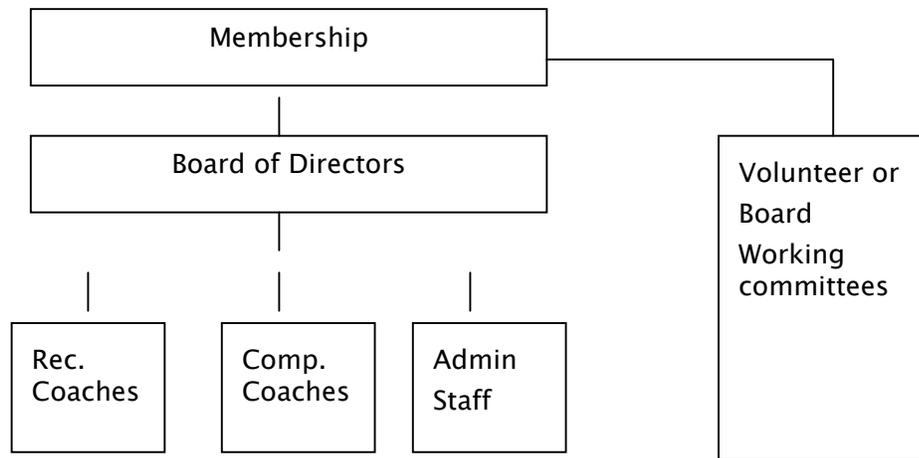
Model #1 Not for Profit

Boards supervise one senior staff person (or staff team). The senior staff person is responsible for all other staff members. Defining reporting relationships is crucial.



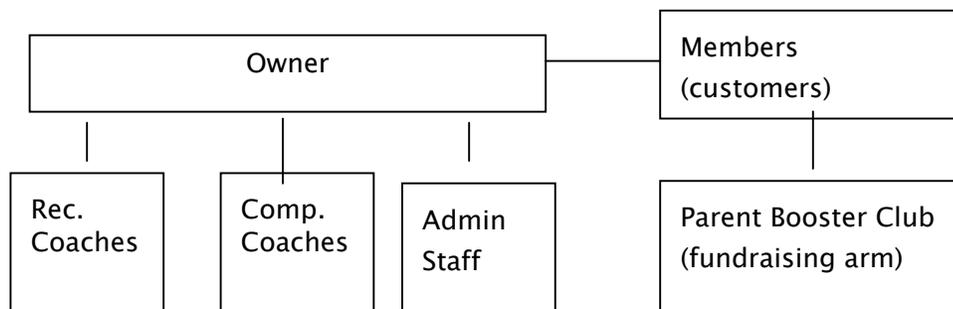
Model #2 Not for Profit

The board supervises staff directly. This model is more common in very small clubs. Often the board will identify a personnel committee so the staff do not have to report to a larger board.



Model #3 Profit Club

The owners are responsible for supervising staff. The members are customers. Often parents may form a non-profit society to raise money with the tax-free shelter of the not-for-profit status.



Characteristics of an Effective Governing Board

- Board members are elected to the position by the membership, and they are accountable to the membership. Board members act as club trustees.
- The board establishes: (1) the constitution and bylaws; (2) the framework for the governance and operational systems; (3) policies that defines how the board, its committees and senior staff function and relate effectively, and how they are evaluated; (4) budgets; and (5) the hiring and supervision of senior staff (or volunteer 'staff').
- There is a clear definition of responsibility. All stakeholders know the primary role of the board and what authority has been transferred to the Executive Director.

- The board focuses on the strategic ‘big picture’. Board members take the time to monitor trends, scan for opportunities, define and adjust perimeters of concern, and relate effectively with the competition.
- Senior leadership (board and executive) is jointly responsible for: (1) obtaining the resources required to achieve the outcomes defined in the strategic priorities; and (2) multi-year financial planning and fund development.
- Performance measurement tools are in place to monitor progress towards desired outcomes, and to monitor the performance of the board and senior employee.

Types of Boards

Policy Boards:

A policy board is ultimately responsible for the long-term direction, health and success of the club. It employs an Executive Director to carry out the day-to-day operations of the club.

Administrative/Working Boards:

This type of board governs with another set of responsibilities that are operational in nature. It is important that such boards remember that it has two different yet simultaneous roles to play, and that these roles are best served by keeping them clear and separate. The board must recognize that it is not serving as board members; they are serving in operational roles. It must be clear to whom they report in these circumstances.

B.5.b. Key Component #2: Strategic Planning

All clubs need to have a strategic plan and a planning cycle regardless of its particular structure. The role of the board is to ensure that the club has a clear direction for its future.

Strategic planning is often passed over due to demanding day-to-day issues, however, a well-designed strategic plan will often provide direction and reduce debate among board members, stakeholders and staff, ultimately saving time and frustration. Strategic plans should involve the staff and board in the development and monitoring of the plan.

Five Key Elements of an Effective Strategic Framework:

1. A governance model that is developed and followed.
2. A vision statement that defines the target that the club wants to attract, in general terms what it wants to accomplish and what the club will look like five or so years into the future. A good vision statement defines success and establishes benchmarks of excellence for the club. It provides a context or an umbrella policy from which all programs operate. It also implies the strategic priorities.

3. A set of club operating principles, beliefs or values that describes how the club will conduct its business.
4. A mission statement that clearly answers the following three questions:
 - What business are you in? WHAT DO YOU DO?
 - Whom do you serve? TO WHOM DO YOU DO IT
 - How do you do your business? AND HOW?
5. Strategic priorities or areas of focus for the club that are developed from assessment exercises, such as the SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) and the club profile.
6. A performance measurement system that evaluates the board or owner, staff and program/service performance. A good system increases accountability, creates a focus on outcomes rather than outputs, and enhances efficiency and effectiveness. It is not only a monitoring strategy but it is also a way to provide positive feedback and seek understanding. Most clubs under utilize performance measures.

B.5.c. Key Component #3: Policies and Procedures

Policy

Policies are essential management tools that guide the club and provide a framework for fair and legal decision-making. Policies often are a lesser priority in resource-deprived clubs, however properly designed and proactive policies will save the club tremendous time in reactive issues management.

Policies are a general description or boundaries within which club business is conducted, how it manages its programs and leads the organization towards its chosen ends. Policies are a tool that allows the board to delegate authority and still maintain control. Good policies are philosophically based and reflect the values of the club, they provide direction to the board, staff and volunteers, but they do not determine how it should be carried out.

Procedures

Procedures describe the steps taken and methods used in carrying out the policies. They are the stated rules by which the policies will be administered. They describe the rules and regulations of how a policy will be implemented (the how and the what is to be done).

Simple Steps in Developing Policies & Procedures Manual:

- Take what you have and compile it electronically.
- Break the information into sections. It is reasonable to date each section and update it as required.
- Make the manual accessible (in print or on the web) so it is viewed as a resource.

- Refer people to the manual to answer questions. It presents a professional image and encourages people to find answers to questions on their own.

Be careful not to contradict any federal, provincial, territorial or Gymnastics Canada policy requirements. Contact your provincial / territorial association or other clubs to inquire about accessing policy and procedure manuals that can be used as models for club development.

SECTION C: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Sport activity clubs, including gymnastics clubs, are really about people coming together to participate in a shared interest. People bring many cultural and diverse experiences and ideas to the shared environment, and they play distinct roles in the not-for-profit club culture. Without the people, the club would not exist, and how a club manages its people is one of the most important aspects of the club structure.

There are three major groups of people involved in the gymnastics club community or family. Like all families there needs to be a sense of belonging and common interest, and a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. Everyone needs to understand their particular role and how it fits and contributes to the club family. The three groups are (1) volunteers, (2) employees and coaches, and (3) customers and participants.

C.1. Customers, Members and Participants

Clubs need members, customers and participants, however they are described. They need to attract and 'sign on' new members and to serve the current members well to keep them coming back year after year. The club membership is also the source of most club volunteers and revenue for club activities. In many clubs the members are also the bulk of the customers. Section D includes ways and means of recruiting and retaining your customers, members and participants.

C.2. Staff and Coaches

Employees and coaches are a club's single most valuable resource. The board or owners decide on the staff model for the club and hire the staff. The owner and/or senior staff are responsible for the hiring of additional staff as required and the development of the business strategy, the programs and budget. Relationships between boards/owners and staff can be challenging if a breakdown occurs in communication or if a conflict develops between the goals of the coach/administrator and the board. Goals, philosophies and methodologies should be synchronized. Communication of roles, responsibilities, and expectations is essential.

C.2.a. Recruitment & Hiring

Key Points:

- Procure the Canadian and your respective Provincial Labour Code, and use them in all your employee practices.
- Develop detailed job descriptions in keeping with your mission, programs, business delivery and budget. Clearly outline the roles and expectations you have of your staff.
- Identify the employee package, compensation, benefits and opportunities offered.
- Seek employees through national, provincial, regional, neighborhood and personal communication vehicles. Use web sites, newspapers, job-posting boards, word of mouth and personal referrals. Coaches are often found by advertising in national and provincial gymnastics publications, as well as through university and college programs that have physical education, recreation and early childhood education programs. Student practicum programs are an added option.
- Design standard contracts and coaching agreements that clearly outline the position, the period of employment, and all other important details of the agreement such as: vacation; overtime; and the probationary period. The employee and appropriate club official sign the staff contract.
- Ask the club lawyer to review the club standard contract/agreement.
- Define clear hiring procedures and the steps required hire or terminate a staff member.
- Write a staff manual that details all aspects of staff employment and job delivery.
- Establish a hiring committee, criteria, and a process. The following questions should help with this task.
 - Who will select candidates to be interviewed and how will they be selected?
 - Who will conduct the interviews?
 - What information will be sought during the interviews?
 - What information will be sought after the interviews?
 - What qualities, qualifications and experience are the most desirable/least desirable?
 - Who will investigate candidate supplied references and other reference sources?
Do not hire without completing the reference check!
- Ensure that staff have the appropriate education, qualifications and certifications such as first aid training.
- Ensure staff and volunteers screening.
- Perform a criminal record check, and check the candidate's experience to ensure it is commensurate with the position requirements.
- The hiring committee reports progress and hiring recommendations to the board or owner.
- Create interim strategies in the event that a worthy candidate is not found in the timelines desired, such as an "Acting" position.

C.2.b. Retaining Staff & Coaches

Keeping quality staff and coaches is one of the key components of a club success and longevity. No matter how large the participation base, without knowledgeable and professional coaches, a club cannot work efficiently and achieve success.

Most gymnastic coaches are professional, but their working conditions in many cases are not always adequate. Issues around support and recognition incentives can create a serious shortage of quality coaches. Therefore, it is extremely important to recognize and value the work and contribution of competent coaches to the success of a program / club.

Incentives, opportunities, respect and good working conditions are essential if Canadian coaches are to embrace a professional and lifetime career in gymnastics.

Coaches are at the centre of the sport delivery system, and they must therefore assume strong leadership and take responsibility for the future. They must play an active role as key leaders and influence changes that will benefit both their profession and the delivery system they are driving.

C.2.b.i. Professional Development

Education and training are very important to the current effectiveness and future viability of the club. It matters not whether the staff are paid or unpaid or untrained professionals or volunteers. Creating a supportive learning environment has many benefits for the club. Unfortunately, many budgets don't leave much room for training, and some people feel that training, (volunteers in particular), is a frill.

C.2.b.ii. Supporting Employees

In addition to the important basics of paying your employees appropriately and treating them well, it is important to:

- Promote open and forthright communications
- Value staff experience, opinions and feelings
- Provide positive feedback and constructive criticism
- Provide competitive compensation packages
- Communicate expectations clearly, and in writing (via contract, and/or staff manual).
- Provide constructive performance evaluations for all staff
- Provide professional development opportunities
- Recognize staff with announcements, presentations and bonuses for good work

C.2.c. Termination

Make sure all policies and procedures are in place and followed. Follow three important steps if an employee must be terminated from their position.

1. Ensure your personnel policies and procedures are complete and up to date.
2. Review the employee's employment agreement or contract.
3. Review and follow the Labour Standards Act.

C.3. Volunteers

C.3.a. The Role of Volunteers

Volunteers play an integral role in the not-for-profit environment and are often responsible for the forming of the club. Volunteers may turn up because of their desire to help out, or they may be "pressed" into volunteer programs, such as clubs that require a set number of volunteer hours per person/family per season from the membership. Volunteers form the not-for-profit club board of directors and most clubs could not operate without the efforts and contributions of volunteers!

Volunteers need to fully understand the role they play in the club, what their job is, and how they are to carry it out. Important also is their understanding about what are the roles of the other personnel in the club and how they relate to one another. Volunteers also need to be accountable for their activities.

Orientation and training of volunteers is very important, as is having a job description, however elementary. Connect new volunteers with those who have a similar role/job and who can act as mentors or coaches. It is important to foster a 'volunteer friendly' environment. For example:

- ✓ Providing an organized system to engage volunteers in the activities you deem valuable and needed for the club's successful operation
- ✓ Providing a leader to manage and deliver activities or programs
- ✓ Crediting and recognizing volunteers every way possible
- ✓ Implementing a communication strategy to keep volunteers informed and involved
- ✓ Empowering volunteers to take leadership roles

Volunteers may contribute in many ways. They may support the day-to-day office or registrar operations, be involved in optional or compulsory fundraising activities, host and plan club events, help build and maintain equipment and facilities, and they may be your coaches or officials.

Along with contribution comes responsibility. Volunteers need to: complete the task(s) assigned; work with other members of the team; support the club; keep the staff and others informed of their activities or issues; and maintain confidentiality when required.

Because of the current trends in volunteerism, clubs need a volunteer management plan and participation options. Volunteers need to feel they are accomplishing something or making a difference, so clubs need to provide experiences that foster this as well as recognize volunteer efforts.

Volunteers expect, and have a right to be:

- Treated fairly and as a co-worker and a valued member of the team
- Heard
- Given suitable assignments that match his/her skill and knowledge
- Given support and encouragement
- Kept informed
- Appreciated and recognized for the work completed.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH VOLUNTEERS:

- ✓ Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- ✓ Be honest and enthusiastic.
- ✓ Catch them at 'being good'.
- ✓ Say "Thank You".

C.3.b. Recruitment

Whatever the approach made to individuals, teams or groups to volunteer, clubs must give people good reasons for volunteering. People want to feel that they are needed.

Honesty is the key!

The information you present to perspective volunteers must be clear and accurate. The message should motivate the volunteer to quick, if not immediate action. Recruit volunteers based on their skills and interests balanced with the club needs. When you know what skills and experience you need for the position at hand, ensure you are clear about the message you send to potential volunteers. Do not misrepresent your needs, expectations or the benefits of the volunteer position or task.

Ask yourself these questions:

- ☞ What action do you want the individual to take? Why do you need their help?

Focus on the unique aspects of your club and its activities. Do not assume everyone has the same information or understanding. Make sure volunteers know how to contact you for further information, and be easily accessible to them.

The Approach

Recruitment techniques may need to vary. After you have determined the numbers, skills, knowledge and level of commitment required from your volunteers, the challenge is to find them! Some methods to recruit volunteers could be:

- ✓ Using the personal approach – asking goes a long way
- ✓ An appeal to individuals or groups of affiliated individuals
- ✓ A publicity campaign
- ✓ Posting the volunteer position as a “job ad” or posting flyers requesting volunteer help
- ✓ Using displays in malls or community centres
- ✓ An appeal through community newsletters

Where to Find Your Volunteers

- ✓ Ask current and past volunteers, participants and family members
- ✓ Talk to youth participants
- ✓ Check with volunteer centres
- ✓ In the general community
- ✓ Asking businesses that support the sport of gymnastics

C.3.c. Retention

In many cases the easier task is finding volunteers. The real challenge lies in keeping them interested and involved. Keeping volunteers active is an on-going process, right from their first contact with the club from the orientation and training provided to acknowledgements received. Retention begins by valuing and understanding what motivates volunteers. Remember that what motivates you may not motivate others. Recognition is personal.

Why Volunteers Leave.

- ☞ They feel they can't fulfill the obligation because of a change in their commitment, time constraints, and energy or health circumstances.
- ☞ There is a perceived gap between what is expected and what can actually be done. The commitment is greater than the volunteer anticipated.
- ☞ There is a lack of support from staff or other volunteers.
- ☞ They are unclear about what is expected of them and become frustrated.
- ☞ They feel their efforts are not appreciated.

Why Volunteers Stay.

- ☞ They feel comfortable with the club and feel part of a team.
- ☞ They can see that their contribution is making a difference.
- ☞ They receive the support and training required to do the assigned task.
- ☞ They have fun and the challenges are manageable.
- ☞ They like the people with whom they are working.
- ☞ They have opportunities to be involved with their children, friends or colleagues.
- ☞ They are committed to the sport of gymnastics.

C.3.c.i. Volunteer Recognition

Recognition, whether subtle or substantial, is an art. When practiced sensitively and honestly it can ensure that a volunteer feels acknowledged, accepted, and praised.

Tips for Successful Recognition:

- ☞ Keep track of volunteer efforts. Help to recognize milestones.
- ☞ Make sure they realize their importance.
- ☞ Personalize the recognition where possible.
- ☞ Ensure support is provided for the volunteer effort.

Personal Recognition

Personal recognition is the responsibility of all volunteers and staff. It involves a smile, thank you letters of appreciation, and many other ways of demonstrating gratitude. It may be formal or informal.

Public Recognition

Public recognition usually involves more tangible forms of recognition. These can be grouped according to type:

- **Words:** letters, citations, articles
- **Awards:** plaques, volunteer certificates, special presentations
- **Rewards:** free tickets to events, training workshops, travel opportunities
- **Events:** banquets, tribute sessions, special occasions such as media presentations

Recognition Ideas That Work

- Have a one-day photo contest for members and volunteers to showcase their contributions. Publish this in a newsletter or special flyer.
- Ask someone to make a presentation as a public recognition of his/her efforts. Ask them to share their stories.
- Give volunteers a special assignment, such as being a team leader or traveling with the team to an event.
- Provide tickets to high-level competitions.
- Send thank you notes and call volunteers throughout the year.

- Send a special newsletter to first-year members. Include a mini-survey to see how they rate your club's service.
- When volunteers drop out try to find out why, and do your best to fix the problem.
- Organize volunteer recognition events and social activities.
- Provide gifts such as mugs or T-shirts.
- Commission a special poster focusing on volunteering for the sport for gymnastics.
- Establish an organized system to track the volunteer activities and milestones.
- Match the appropriate form of recognition to the individual. Personalize the recognition efforts where possible.
- Build an aura of prestige around your major awards. They should be valued as something to work towards.

C.3.c.ii. Volunteer Support: Professional Development

Professional development for volunteers allows them to maximize their contribution to the club and they learn something in return. Professional development does not have to cost a lot of money. Think creatively! Is there a member who is a business owner or retiree trained in an area that the club and the volunteer need? Look at bartering or in-kind arrangements for mentoring volunteers, using all the resources of your membership, partners and sponsors. Connect new volunteers with those who have a similar role/job.

Training of volunteers (and staff) should include:

1. A formal and comprehensive orientation
2. Formal and informal on-the-job training
3. Transitional training and support for taking on new roles within the club

Points to consider:

- Base the training opportunities on the experience and knowledge of the volunteer. Don't waste time by teaching them what they already know.
- Make the training practical and relevant to the volunteer experience. Coordinate the training so it is ongoing and planned, not a one-time event.
- Create realistic times and dates that respect the volunteer's time.
- Set up a learning climate that is informal and supportive of risk-taking.
- Work the budget to provide the time and financial resources needed to support volunteer training.

SECTION D: DEVELOPING FIRST-RATE BUSINESS PRACTICES

Do you know.....?

...Why some parts of your operations are doing well, and other activities or ideas never get off the drawing board?

...If your business decisions are based on informed decisions or based on intuition and gut feeling?

...What are the needs of your members and clients or how you can best meet them?

...How to best position your club to take advantages of the continuous opportunities and challenges that come your way?

...Do you have the processes and systems in place to keep your club operating effectively?

D.1. What are Business Practices?

Business practices refer to the presence and practice of processes and systems that allow a club to conduct its business and activities in the most effective and efficient manner possible. Clubs might wonder why it has to have a business plan. Business planning, for some, requires a bit of a shift in thinking. But without good business practices in place, clubs will not operate as well as they need to in today's competitive environment.

Good business practices include, but may not be limited to the following list of key factors or elements:

D.1.a. Business Planning

1. The club has a current strategic plan that has been approved by club members. Beliefs, values, a vision and mission are clearly articulated and embraced. A strategic planning process is in place. The plan actively guides the club, and positions it to be able to recognize and resolve issues, and to seize opportunities.
2. The yearly planning process helps the board make decisions, establish priorities and evaluate the club operations.
3. There is a supportive relationship between the club systems and organizational structures.

D.2.b. Communications

1. There is a seamless flow of communication within and outside the club to and from key audiences.
2. The club contacts its external stakeholders on a regular basis.
3. The club has a plan in place to help it communicate to the membership.
4. The club regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its communication activities (i.e. newsletters, bulleting board, brochures).
5. The club consults with its members on a regular basis to ensure their interests are reflected in the programs and services offered.
6. The club has dedicated resources (staff or volunteer and a budget) to support communication activities.

D.4.c. Volunteer Management

The club fosters positive volunteer and employee relations.

1. The majority of volunteer positions have job descriptions that identify roles, responsibilities, skill requirements and authority guidelines.
2. The club has enough volunteers involved in the club activities.
3. There are ways and means in place to show appreciation and to recognize the efforts of club volunteers.
4. The club has a volunteer management plan in place that outlines recruitment, retention and recognition strategies.

D.4.d. Membership Retention

1. The club sets membership targets every year.
2. The club retains at least 90% of its members each year.
3. The club recruits at least 20% new members each year.
4. The club rewards its current members who help recruit new members.
5. The club contacts all members who do not return the following year.

D.4.e. Revenue Generation & Marketing

1. There are marketing and revenue generation strategies developed and in implementation, with diverse sources and methods that provide a stable financial base for growth and fiscal accountability to members and stakeholders.
2. The club marketing initiatives provides excellent programs to its community, however that has been defined.
3. The club sets revenue targets every year.
4. The club obtains the majority of its revenue from more than one source.

5. The club actively searches out new sources of revenue each year.
6. The club has at least two revenue generating strategies that involve external partners.
7. The club tries at least one new revenue-generating event or initiative each year.
8. The club evaluates and maximizes business partnerships and its operational capacity.

D.4.f. Board Practices

1. The board ensures that resources are consistently focused on the club's mission.
2. The board is knowledgeable about the wants, needs and interests of the members.
3. Board members are aware of their roles and responsibilities on behalf of the membership.
4. The board and committees have clear terms of reference that identify roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and authority guidelines.
5. The club makes decisions that do not put it at any perceived or real risk.
6. The club has policies in place that help the board make informed decisions.
7. The club has motivated and supportive board, staff and volunteers.
8. The club has a board-approved system for budgeting and financial reporting to the membership annually.
9. There are effective decision-making and conflict resolution processes, policies and procedures in place and practiced.
10. Meetings are action-oriented and a valuable use of staff and volunteer time.
11. The board provides an in-depth orientation to new board members to ensure they feel part of the team.

D.2. Why Plan?

As the trends indicate, not only does money not grow on trees, the trees are decreasing in number! Public sector funding support is decreasing; members, customers and clients expect more value for their hard earned dollars; sponsors are very selective in their support; equipment is not getting cheaper; and staff and volunteers generate expenses doing the work of the club... the list grows. Planning is a vehicle for clubs to ensure that its operations and activities are based on good business practices.

Clubs are a business operation. And they need to be treated like a business – whether it is a competitive club with a coaching staff, extensive travel and event costs, or it is a community recreation club in a school with after school and weekend programs.

What will a Business Plan do for your Club?

- ✓ It strategically positions your club for success. You want your business goals and activities to be in alignment with the current environment and trends. Planning ensures that your leadership team has a realistic picture and appreciation of what is occurring that can influence a club's success. It gives your club a clear road map for all your resource development and management (financial and human), and focuses your operations and activities on results.
- ✓ It insures that your business makes financial and operating sense, and it helps you make informed decisions about issues and opportunities that may hinder or help you reach your goals.
- ✓ It serves to organize business development activities and ideas, and it creates a climate for innovation and creativity.
- ✓ It determines realistic benchmarks to measure performance and ensure a good return on investment.
- ✓ It connotes credibility to potential sponsors and other funders, in that it:
 - Demonstrates that the club has been intentional in developing strategies to maximize opportunities;
 - Has assembled a team capable of managing the product or service; and
 - Has carefully considered the financial implications of the marketing plan.

D.3. Developing Your Business Plan

There are ten important but fairly straightforward steps to take when you begin the process of developing your business plan. The size or budget of your club is not a factor. Every club should follow these basic steps.

D.3.a. Ten Planning Steps

1. Designate a coordinator of the plan.
2. Establish timeframes for its completion.
3. Identify the people responsible for providing necessary information.
4. Gather the required information.
5. Organize the information in a logical fashion, described below in D.4.
6. Identify people to be responsible for writing the sections of the plan. If possible, it is better to do the actual planning activities such as the assessment activities and the brainstorming of opportunities and ideas in with a club planning team. The assistance of an accountant is a good idea if your business plan is being prepared to attract partners or to access venture capital.

7. Write the plan.
8. Distribute, review and discuss the plan. Challenge its assumptions.
9. Revise the plan as necessary.
10. Implement the plan with an agreed monitoring process and evaluate the plan at those times.

Planning Tips		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write your own plan. ▪ Ensure proper format and consistency (i.e. in financial statements, forecasts, marketing, operating). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't worry about confidentiality. Get a second opinion before presenting it. Use your resources (banker, lawyer, consultants). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write clearly. ▪ Support your claims. ▪ Get it right the first time. ▪ Be brief. ▪ Don't hide the risks. ▪ Talk about success factors.

D.4. Business Plan Components & Description

Every business plan needs to include key information about the club's past, present and future. It is an assessment of all the club has 'been and done' and the present circumstances of its capacity and operations, and it sets out its future in the form of strategic goals and action plans.

The plan should contain the following components:

Executive Summary	<p>It includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The club mission, vision, operating principles and goals 2. The club's products or services, and who the club serves 3. A summary of the internal and external environmental assessment 4. Projected financial results 5. A budget with the amount of revenue required and how it will be allocated. <p>This is written last, after the business plan has been developed.</p>
Club History	<p>This section lays out the historical highlights of the club's founding, its growth, challenges and successes. It might include points about funding partners, milestone events or activities and the current operating circumstances of the club.</p>

<p>Club Readiness</p>	<p>Readiness for change indicates how willing a club is to adapt to a desired change. It is the level of acceptance of people affected by this change that will either support or resist the implementation.</p> <p><u>Change can be a challenge!</u> There are reasons why some people resist change. There are those who fear change, and planning sets the stage for potential change. Some feel that even though the current situation may not be the best, it is at least familiar. Planning also challenges traditional ways; it identifies issues and forces decisions. Planning also places additional demands on both time and accountability. Change can only be successfully implemented when a club and those responsible for the critical decisions are ready to engage in strategic thinking and informed decision-making.</p> <p><u>Find A Champion!</u> Finding the right leader to champion a marketing plan is also critical. The attitude of the leader towards other people is probably more critical than the type of change itself! Planning takes not just strong management skills, but strong leadership ability as well!</p> <p><u>Making a change begins with discussing these six questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do you want to make this change? 2. What exactly, is the type of change you want to make? 3. Who will be affected by this change? 4. Who will make the decision regarding this change? 5. Who will influence the decision-makers? 6. Where and when will you start?
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<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment: Process & Tools</p>	<p>The first step in any planning process is an assessment.</p> <p>The Assessment Process and Tools:</p> <p>Through a few simple but important exercises, described below, the club identifies and analyzes its strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.</p> <p>① Developing a Club Inventory or Profile:</p> <p>Collecting useful historical information is a great starting point. Past club plans, media clippings, program statistics, and surveys are examples. In many cases this activity can, and perhaps should be undertaken by someone who has no vested interest in the club, and who has experience in assessment. They can ask the right questions! In any case, a group of staff and key volunteers are needed to act as a resource group.</p> <p>② Environmental Scanning:</p> <p>This includes taking a critical look at the environment, in particular any factors at play that can may have an impact on the club. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Market potential ☞ Competition ☞ Club capacity (staff & volunteers) ☞ Members ☞ Facilities ☞ The economy and demographics ☞ Past audits/surveys/reports ☞ Information about other clubs (not just gymnastics) in your area and their waiting lists <p>Clubs need to look at economical, technological, social, environmental and political factors. The make up of every community is different and this means that the information and the source of information may also be different.</p> <p>This research determines the potential demand for programs and services and future opportunities in the market, it estimates expected revenue levels, it identifies the target market(s), and the personnel needed.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment: Process & Tools Continued</p>	<p>③ Stakeholder Analysis: This is a process of trying to identify the primary, secondary and other possible groups or clubs that might have an impact on your club. This exercise needs a big wall space with lots of paper and tape!</p> <hr/> <p>Tools to complete the above activities are, for example: surveys; interviews and focus groups. A participation inventory is an excellent exercise to help a club develop a profile of its customers and to assess its programs and services.</p> <hr/> <p>④ SWOT Exercise: This exercise provides a snapshot of the environment in which the club functions and helps focus planning activities on opportunities and strategies that will ‘grow’ the club. The assessment includes looking at these eight club elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance 2. Club Personnel (staff & volunteers) 3. Volunteerism 4. Membership 5. Communications 6. Operations 7. Marketing 8. Revenue Generation <p><u>A Gap Analysis:</u> Remember: The most important thing about assessment is the analysis, and what new insights and new information can be used to create a better plan! All these exercises identify the missing links between what the club wants to achieve (its vision), and the reality of the club circumstances and environment.</p> <p><u>The Check-In:</u> Is your plan feasible? As the planning proceeds, stand back and reflect, to make sure that the ideas being developed are feasible. This may mean setting priorities and shifting resources.</p> <p>You may wish to ‘nominate’ someone who does not have a direct relationship to the club to be a planning coach. This person is given the permission to ask the ‘wicked questions.’</p>
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	<p>A Few Important Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ What can you do, or what needs to be done to improve/change the situation? Is this a time for action? What action? ☞ What are the possibilities? What are the possible solutions, options or actions? If you had your choice, what would you do?
<p>A Strategic Framework</p>	<p>This includes a club vision and mission, a set of organizing or operating principles and strategic priorities. These must be current and supported by the board and the membership to be effective.</p> <p>The assessment and what is learned provides the information needed to make informed decisions about what the club should include in its plans. This is the responsibility of the board, but it should be developed through a participatory process with club members, staff, and stakeholders.</p>
<p>Strategies & Implementation Plans For Club Activity Areas</p>	<p>Strategies and accompanying action plans should be 'SMART':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific: What do you want to accomplish? ▪ Measurable: How will you monitor progress? ▪ Agreed-Upon: How will this strategy and milestone satisfy your needs? ▪ Results: What are the desired products or outcomes? ▪ Time-bound: How long will it take to complete the strategies and their milestones? <p>All decisions should be based on: (1) what will help the club achieve its vision, (2) what environment and activities or programs best serve the staff and coaches, members, customers, participants and volunteers.</p> <p>Areas for strategy development include, but are not necessarily limited to:</p> <p>Finance: Program Revenue, Fundraising, Gaming and Grants</p> <p>Communications: Internal (members/stakeholders/customers/clients), External (Advertising, Media, Publicity Activities)</p> <p>Programming: Recreation and Competitive Disciplines</p> <p>Revenue Generation & Marketing: Events, Membership, Technical Competitions, Programs, Social Events</p> <p>Personnel: Staff & Volunteers: Recruitment, Retention, Recognition, Professional Development</p>

<p>The Financial Plan</p>	<p>The financial plan includes how much revenue the club must have to function each year (or over the next 1–3 years), when the funds are needed, where the funds are to be allocated, and the sources for the money required.</p> <p>It is always good to have options, for example: Plan A: Optimistic Plan B: Realistic Plan C: A back up plan in case expected funding does not materialize</p> <p>The club may need to recruit or contract someone with accounting knowledge for this part of the business plan.</p>
<p>A Performance Measurement System</p>	<p>It is absolutely critical that a monitoring process, schedule and tools be established and carried out to evaluate progress and results. How did the club do? What does the club need to change? What can it do differently or better next time?</p> <p>Performance measures should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measure the extent to which the board and staff are reaching club goals ▪ Include program assessment and individual performance appraisals ▪ Recognize areas where external influences may be beyond club control <p>Structuring the benchmarks and developing the review process should be participatory. This process should develop a sense of ownership, and reduce anxiety. Examples are regular staff/volunteer management meetings, reports to the board, and surveys to the membership.</p>
<p>Appendices</p>	<p>This is the place to append helpful planning tools such as: worksheets; case studies; sample formats; articles and websites that support the planning process.</p>

THE BUSINESS PLANNING CYCLE

Assessment: Internal and External



D.5. Revenue Generation

D.5.a. Overview

The Most Common Methods of Revenue Generation*

-
- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| ▪ Program Revenue ** | ▪ Sponsorship | ▪ Membership |
| ▪ Direct Mail | ▪ Special Events | ▪ Gaming & Bingo |
| ▪ Telemarketing | ▪ Planned Giving | ▪ Merchandising |
-

Direct Sales

* The resources have sport related illustrations and further information on revenue generation methods. Refer also to the resource “101 Revenue Generating Ideas” in the Business of Gymnastics section on the Gymnastic Canada Website for hundreds of examples and case studies.

** In most cases, club revenue (around 75%) comes from programs. The rest of the revenue comes from grants and fundraising, followed by philanthropic sources such as donations, service clubs and businesses.

D.5.b. Seven Steps to Fundraising Success

There is no easy way to ensure success. Clubs can face repeating or different issues and challenges. Take a step-by-step approach for better success!

Step 1:

Set up a revenue generating committee with people who have related experience, and who represent the voluntary, public and private sectors. Recruit the personalities and skills that suit the club’s fundraising needs, such as accountants and people with creative marketing or promotional experience.

Step 2:

Hire someone IF AT ALL POSSIBLE! A part time person will make a huge difference. Staff can provide more consistent support than can volunteers, and staff are accountable for results.

Step 3:

All clubs must develop and document a revenue generation plan. It can be a simple two to three page document or be much more complex and detailed, depending up on the size and scope of club programs and services.

Step 4:

Complete a “Revenue Mix” exercise. Do it twice for the best results.

Step 5:

Collect trends, network and share ideas regularly. It is this information that will lead to running successful programs. Document these ideas in your plan, and turn these ideas into strategies and action plans.

Step 6:

Be innovative and look for partnerships. A small percentage of several large projects is sometimes better than a large percentage of one project. It is less risky as well!

Step 7:

Make a commitment to develop detailed revenue generating strategies. It is less costly to have an oversight in a planning exercise than in real life. A revenue generation plan must be flexible and updated often.

D.5.c. Program Revenue***D.5.c.i. Sources of Program Income*****Recreational Programs:**

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational | <input type="checkbox"/> Gymnaestrada | <input type="checkbox"/> Summer Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-school | <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary & High school | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Programs (field trips, kids night-out) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent & Tots | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheer Squads | <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced recreational gymnastics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration | <input type="checkbox"/> Adults
Teens | |

Competitive:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boys | <input type="checkbox"/> Adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Trampoline & Tumbling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Girls | <input type="checkbox"/> Artistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport aerobics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teens | <input type="checkbox"/> Rhythmic | <input type="checkbox"/> Acrobatics |

Other:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheerleading | <input type="checkbox"/> Babies | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry-land cross training (e.g. rock-climbing and ski-jumping) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dance | <input type="checkbox"/> Gymnastics related sports | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circus Arts | | |

D.5.c.ii. Members, Customers & Participants as Revenue Sources

Attending to recruitment and retention – get back to the basics!

Customers, members and/or participants expect four basic things from gymnastics personnel:

- ✓ Look at me
- ✓ Smile at me
- ✓ Talk to me
- ✓ Thank me

These four basic principles are easy to remember and easy to teach at any level. If your staff can practice these four things consistently, your club has taken the magical first step toward developing life-long members. The bottom line in customer service is providing what the customer wants, not what you want them to have!

a) Recruitment

Members

Membership is a very significant revenue source, especially for medium and small clubs.

Membership has two components: (1) the recruitment of new members, and (2) the retention of members. Planning a detailed membership strategy for these two components needs to include strategies for promotion, pricing, branding, and customer service.

Remember – Attitudes are changing towards memberships!

- The new currency is time not money.
- Expectations for membership are higher than ever before.
- The hassle factor needs to be reduced.
- Members will allow you little time to prove the value of a membership.
- People want one stop shopping, and they are willing to pay extra for the service.

Ideas to Acquire Members:

- ☞ New promotion programs
- ☞ Targeted direct mail programs
- ☞ Planned incentives
- ☞ Hosting an open house
- ☞ Special offers to past members

Customers

As participants are for the most part minors, parents are the customers as they pay for the kids! The success of the club relies heavily upon their satisfaction. Great service is what keeps customers loyal and supportive. They are key players in making the operation a success!

Ideas to Attract Customers:

① Develop a customer profile.

- ☞ Who are your customers, where and how they can be reached?
- ☞ Study your current membership, your neighborhood and community demographics to determine whom club wants to attract, and who can be enticed.

② Promote! Promote!

- ☞ Advertising and promotions should be directed at the customer profile, and should use the vehicles to which this audience generally subscribes and responds (e.g. parent magazines, local newspapers, mall demonstrations, direct mail). Be sure to allocate funds in the budget for advertising and promotion.
- ☞ Word of mouth is one of the best and most powerful marketing tools. Run excellent programs with good coaches, ensure great customer service, and word of mouth will work for you!

Participants

Without the participants there would be no reason for clubs to exist! Participants in programs range in age from ages one through adulthood, but most members are in the pre-school and school age brackets. The efforts of volunteers and employees should be directed towards providing safe and positive experiences for the participant that will enhance their physical, social and psychological well-being.

Ideas to Attract Participants:

- ☞ *Make use of direct marketing to reach parents and have their children sign up for programs.*
- ☞ *Provide safe and enjoyable programs.*
- ☞ *Provide challenging programs, but ensure participants achieve success.*

b) Retention

The deal between the club and the member, or a customer is no longer sealed when the fees are paid. That is just the start of the relationship. Smart clubs stay close to their 'constituents' long after fees have changed hands.

- ☞ How do you keep in contact with first or second year members in your club?
- ☞ What else do you do to really close the deal and keep that person coming back?

Ideas to Retain Members:

First-Year Member Retention Pointers:

- ☞ Contact each new member at least twice during his or her first year.

- ☞ Create an orientation kit including such things as a welcome letter, a list of important club telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, club rules and policies, a calendar of events, and the programs and services offered.
- ☞ Identify new members in the club newsletter or other communications.
- ☞ Do a follow up survey each year to find out if new members are coming back, and why or why not.

Celebrating new members is OUT ... Keeping them is IN.

Ideas to Retain Customers:

- ☞ Make the contact with the club and registering for a class as easy as possible.
- ☞ Maintain a clean greeting, reception and lobby area and offer friendly, efficient reception services.
- ☞ Ask for feedback on the club's operations and respond to the feedback.
- ☞ Offer opportunities for current members to access a priority registration process.
- ☞ Communicate frequently about key club information, including the club vision, mission, and the fun and safety of the programs. Provide newsletters and bulletin boards to inform people about events, classes, registration and fund raising activities.
- ☞ Create a parent's handbook for recreational members to inform them about expectations and responsibilities.

Ideas to Retain Participants

- Monitor program delivery and coaching, and strive for constant improvement.
- Evaluate participant experience and respond to feedback from participants and parents.
- Provide a variety of programs so that participants can "grow" with the club and enrol in advanced recreational, competitive or related programs.

Follow These Ten Rules of Quality Service

1. Understand the member as a customer by making the effort to know their needs.
2. Keep members informed and current. Listen to them!
3. Be trustworthy and honest.
4. Perform the service dependably and accurately.
5. Be willing to help members and provide prompt service.
6. Be competent.
7. Be approachable.
8. Be polite, respectful and friendly, especially to new members.
9. Ensure your facility is free from danger and risk.
10. The appearance of the physical facility, the equipment, the communication materials and staff are critical to success.

Reprinted from *Creating Value for Members* by Donald Beldfall, 1999

D.5.c.iii. Other Income Opportunities

a) Fundraising

Fundraising has been a luxury in the past. Today generating funds effectively from different sources is imperative. Furthermore, having a wide variety of revenue generating methods (called the Revenue Mix) is also critical. For example, having one funding source that provides more than 40% of club total revenue is not a healthy mix. The loss of gaming and lottery revenue is an example of the need to revisit and revise your revenue mix. Be creative in your ideas and approaches.

Many not-for-profit clubs rely on fundraising to pay for operational shortfalls and the purchase of things such as gym and office equipment. As well, all activities and projects large or small require human and financial resources. The fundraising dollars may be written into the budget as revenue with estimated dollar amounts or it may be treated as a separate item.

A number of clubs now have their own revenue generating staff and team, but many clubs still depend upon volunteers. Some clubs guarantee fundraising targets by making fundraising assistance mandatory for members for some programs.

Fundraising Challenges

- ☞ It is important that the club only budget for income that it is confident it will generate. This could include program revenue, multi-year grants or sponsorships, membership fees, and fundraisers with a demonstrated track record. New or uncertain fundraisers, grant applications, raffles or events should not be included in the budget as revenue.
- ☞ The lack of a diversified revenue mix makes a club dependent upon a few sources of revenue.

Clubs do not always take the time needed to develop a well-informed fundraising plan.

- ☞ Inexperience in fundraising or uncommitted volunteers limits success.

b) Government Contributions

If your club is a not for profit, you are eligible to apply for several opportunities sponsored by the various levels of government. Examples are: travel grants, infrastructure grants, program grants (i.e.: programs for people with disabilities)

Government, and in turn the organizations it funds, have been hit hard with funding cuts during the past eight to ten years. There is still funding available, but it is much harder to obtain and even harder to sustain. The best advice is to keep in touch with government staff and watch for new grant initiatives. A good sense of timing, progressive partnerships, recognizing opportunities, and a little luck go a long way sometimes! As government grants decline, new foundation opportunities are on the increase.

c) Foundations

A foundation is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization that has been established to maintain or aid education, social, charitable or other activities serving the common good. They primarily provide grants to other not-for-profit organizations and groups.

There are four types of foundations. Those that:

1. Were set up by a family
2. Serve a specific community
3. Were set up by a corporation
4. Support a specific interest or cause

There are more than one thousand foundations in Canada at this time. The Trillium Foundation of Ontario for example, provides about one hundred million dollars each year to various groups and organizations. Many foundations have been created by organizations like service clubs and businesses such as MacDonald's to help not-for-profits offer community programs and services to various sectors of the population like youth, disabled and under privileged children etc.

Sport clubs have been slow to take advantage of this funding source, but interest is growing rapidly. Gymnastics clubs need to pay more attention to this substantial source of funding. Human resources and some financial resources need to be applied to this area to research the available sources and make the applications. A grant and foundation application writer is essential for all revenue generation committees.

d) Service Groups

This is another great source of revenue that sport groups have traditionally ignored. There are twenty to twenty-five large service clubs in Canada whose sole purpose is to provide money and services to community causes and activities.

Approaching Foundations and Service Groups

Directly: Ask to attend one of their meetings to present your request.

Indirectly: Recruit a local service club member to be your champion. Give him/her all the needed information and coaching, and allow this person to be your sponsor and make presentations on your behalf. If you are successful at a local level, you and your sponsor may choose to take this request to a regional or national level. Choose your sponsor very carefully.

e) Rentals

Some clubs rent parts of their facility to outside groups as a revenue source, or they rent space to tenants.

f) Individual Donations

Individual donations are still are the most lucrative source of revenue generation for not-for-profit clubs. Charities generally raise thirty to thirty-five percent more dollars from individuals than is received from government. A successful donor program requires a relationship-building strategy.

g) Corporate Donations and Sponsorships

Many corporations today are looking for concrete business opportunities with their sponsorships. This means that sponsorships must sell more product, demonstrate good sales opportunities, provide sampling and test marketing opportunities, build brand loyalty, and collect quality market research.

With sponsorship, a business arrangement is made with a company where they offer discounts, cash, or contra in exchange for advertising exposure at the club, or at an event, or in other exposure vehicles like club newsletters, event programs, and web sites. Developing a detailed sponsorship contract is critical. Organizations like Coke and Pepsi sign hundreds every day! Sponsorship requires giving up control of some of your event communication, make sure you are comfortable with this.... there is a price for everything.

The rule of thumb for donations during the past fifteen to twenty years has been eighty-five percent (85%) received from individuals, ten percent (10%) from corporations and five percent (5%) from foundations.

h) Small Business

Small business often helps clubs for the same reasons, as do the bigger corporations. Research has shown however, that a small business will stay involved in a sponsorship program for more personal than business reasons. Sponsoring companies usually serve a specific geographical area and exist because of the customer base in that area. A club that can demonstrate that they can increase the traffic of a small business can more easily obtain a sponsorship commitment. However, a small business can only support a few select programs or clubs. Planning well in advance, having a strong commitment to excellent customer service, and working hard to retain members is critical to clubs exploring the possibility of a sponsorship.

i) Sale of Merchandise

Clubs often generate additional revenue by offering pro-shop or other items for sale such as grips, bodysuits, tracksuits or clothing. Clubs must consider staffing and security when setting up these services. Often there will be a locked display case with the products and limited hours when purchases can be made.

J) Sales Activities:

Gymathons, chocolate sales, prize draws, entertainment book sales, cookie dough sales and similar events are common fundraising projects. These may be delivered in bursts, where the

event takes place over a month of intense activity, or may be an ongoing fundraising project where members and friends can purchase the item continuously throughout the year. Frozen cookie dough and plastic food wrap are sometimes offered this way. There is benefit in having an annual fundraising plan and offering the same events and at the same time of the year, for example chocolate sales every Christmas and gymathon every March. In this way, your members and customers come to expect the event and are ready to participate.

k) Booster Clubs

Clubs sometimes create a Booster Club, which acts as a fundraising committee, particularly if a club needs to raise money for competition expenses, coaches, uniforms or equipment to name a few. Booster Clubs also play an important role in hosting, running meets or clinics, and undertaking activities that create and maintain an 'esprit de corps' in the club. If you are thinking about setting up a Booster Club, put a planning process in place, just as you would for any initiative. This might include such things as researching legal or policy needs, drafting a terms of reference and policies and procedures, setting up a communication process, laying out opportunities and responsibilities for participation of members and parents, a game plan, budget, and a monitoring process.

l) Gym Event Meet Hosting

Many clubs host invitational or regional/zone competitions as a method of fundraising. These events require a large group of volunteers in order to effectively run the event. If expenses can be held down, revenue from registration, advertising sales, and sponsorship can be quite healthy. Again, the club should try to place their signature event on the annual calendar and always host at the same time of year, for example "The Spring Fling" every year the third week of April. If your event is well organized and enjoyable, teams will return year after year.

m) Planned Giving and Capital Campaigns

Clubs embarking on large capital campaigns to build gymnastics facilities usually involve the services of a professional fund raiser, and rely on federal, provincial and municipal funding to help support such undertakings. These campaigns usually offer donors a method to get tax receipts; where as the smaller projects generally do not. This market is getting very competitive, with some consulting agencies offering a money back guarantee. Most companies are bundling programs and services (i.e. planned giving, donation and capital campaign). A local Kitchener company Boy Campaign Consultants offers a "breakthrough program" that guarantees a return of 3 times your initial investment.

D.6. Marketing

Marketing as a concept has a variety of definitions and it is often misunderstood. Whatever the description, in essence the marketing plan is the foundation of a good business plan.

- ☞ Marketing can be described as a broad complex process that involves three integrated planning pieces: strategic; tactical and operational.
- ☞ It can simply be explained as an “exchange” in that it requires matching customer requirements with products and services to achieve an acceptable return on investment.
- ☞ Marketing is also an approach, a way of seeing programs and events as opportunities to get your club’s message across to a defined group of people.

D.6.a. The Marketing Process

In its simplest terms, marketing is a process of making a product or service attractive to a defined target group. To market effectively, a club must be in a position to have the answers to the following questions:

1. Is there a positive state of readiness in the club?
2. Where are we now? What is the current state of the marketplace and the club? What does the club know for sure about its environment?
3. What information is needed to position the club for the future?
4. How will the club get there?
5. What were the results? How well did the club perform?

D.6.b. Five Marketing Planning Steps

D.6.b.i. Is Your Club Ready for Change?

As detailed in the information about strategic planning (D.4. Business Plan Components), your club has to be ready, willing and able to develop, implement and sustain a marketing strategy. This implies human and financial resources and a certain level of operational capacity.

D.6.b.ii. Situational Analysis – Understanding the Big Picture!

Understanding the big picture is an important concept because it places boundaries around the markets, the environment and club capabilities. It ensures that the direction set through the marketing process will be accurate and realistic. This step involves the collection of historical information and the analysis of the current situation to identify such things as user trends, opportunities and problems. Tools used to help understand the current club environment are

described in the strategic planning section, but there are also tools that relate specifically to marketing needs.

D.6.b.iii. Strategic Analysis for the Future

There are numerous activities that can be reviewed at this stage of the process. This process mirrors the business planning process in Section D.

In particular, however, it is very important that clubs also conduct some research to gain information about the following topics to build the marketing strategy.

Knowing your competition and identifying potential partnerships:

There are direct and indirect competitors. Find out about their pricing strategy and their competitive advantage or niche. If you fully understand your strengths and weaknesses relative to your competition, you are more apt to be able to turn some weaknesses into opportunities.

Sales and Revenue Planning

Discuss how and where you plan to sell and distribute your products and/or services.

- ☞ Will you use staff, a skilled volunteer or contract the work out to a consultant?
- ☞ How many 'sales' people will you require?
- ☞ Will they be compensated and how (e.g. salary or commission)?
- ☞ What education and experience is required and how will you find and attract good salespeople?

Promotions & Advertising

- ☞ How you will generate awareness of your products and/or services among potential customers? Which promotional activities will you use (e.g. public relations, trade shows, sales incentives, and/or promotional literature)?
- ☞ Will these expenses comprise a large percentage of club total expenses?

A Check List for a Winning Marketing Plan

- The plan is desired and used by management.
- Key stakeholders feel some ownership in the planning process and its activities.
- It is supported by effective communication.
- It is realistic and 'custom made' for the club's circumstances.
- The plan is based on solid information, both primary and secondary data.
- It is a complete, easy-to-follow plan.
- The marketing plan is reviewed annually.
- The user wrote it.
- Success is measured by outcomes.
- It includes innovative strategies.

D.6.b.iv. The Development of Marketing Strategies

Note: The communication section includes information about tools and vehicles that should be developed in concert with marketing and fundraising activities of the club.

The assessment and research has been completed and analyzed, and the club is now ready to develop marketing strategies and implementation plans.

<p>Target Markets & Market Segmentation & Market Share</p>	<p>This process is frequently overlooked. Concentrating resources on the needs of a specific segment and carving out a niche may mean the difference between success and failure. It is really important that the club knows its market, if the club needs/wants more market share or whether it just wants to properly service current levels.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fish where there are fish!</p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify your target markets through developing 'ideal' customer, member and participant profiles. <input type="checkbox"/> Estimate the market share and sales volume that you think you can achieve over the next two or three years. Identify which portions of your estimate represent "hard" purchase commitments and present this information in tabular form. <input type="checkbox"/> Choose a specific segment(s) of the market. You cannot be everything to everyone!
<p>Positioning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Your marketing position is how you stand out in the market place, and the process by which you design, establish, and sustain a viable niche in the changing external market. The success of your advertising and promotion depends on it! <input type="checkbox"/> Know what is unique or special about your club and use this to develop key positioning messages.
<p>Strategy Development</p>	<p>Follow the 7 P's of Marketing (Program, Place, Partnerships, People, Pricing, Promotion, Packaging), and use these elements (based on your market assessment) as a guide as you develop the details of your strategy, as described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Choose your program, products and/or services. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the most appropriate place or distribution areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify all the possible partnerships. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure there is an effective member /customer relations

	<p>strategy. Club retention depends on it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Develop a pricing strategy that enables the club to penetrate the market, maintain and increase its market share in a competitive environment and earn a profit. There are three things consumers seek and all three must be considered. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Value 2. Choice 3. Convenience ❑ Identify an effective promotion plan. ❑ Package all the elements creatively. They all must be supportive and consistent with the club mandate.
Implementing	<p>Tactics are all the detailed actions and activities that you need to do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Who will do the work? ❑ What are the timelines? ❑ What resources are needed?

D.6.b.v. Monitoring and Evaluation

This is a very important activity in the planning cycle. It is one that is often minimized or forgotten altogether. If a club is going to invest time and money to develop a marketing plan, it needs to ensure the plan results in the desired outcomes!

D.7. Operations

Generally speaking, operations refer to the activities that are needed to conduct the club's day-to-day business, programs and services.

Running a club with good business practices can be a challenge that might include having a Board, staff or coaches who may be inexperienced in governance or business management, or who may not be clear about their respective roles and responsibilities. There may be limitations to the facility or resources may not be managed as well as they could.

D.7.a. Key Components of Club Operations

D.7.a.i. Program Management

Effective program design and delivery is the cornerstone of a club's success. Managing this area takes expertise, diligence, astute management and good business practices. Depending upon the club mission, there will be a variety of programs offered and aimed at a diverse

clientele. There will need to be close observation and responsiveness in the delivery, so that the club can keep classes full and customers happy.

D.7.a.ii. Program Design

The design of your programs will be influenced by factors such as:

- The club mission and philosophy
- Financial resources
- Club location
- Gym and auxiliary spaces
- Availability of coaches in and around your community
- Equipment
- Situational influences (e.g. whether the club is a set-up/take down gym or a gymnastics centre).

Planning (Refer to business planning process)

Long-term program development will require planning and preparation. It will be the club aim to create safe, enjoyable and progressive programs that meet the needs and expressed desires of customers and the community. Be prepared to refine your programs and their delivery over the years.

Suggestions for Creating Fantastic Programs

Research:

- Study other successful programs and compile the 'ingredients' to discover the commonalities.
- Use existing programs instead of reinventing the wheel (i.e.: The Canadian Program). Other clubs or coaches might offer information about their successful programs for you to use or adapt for your club.

Write a Good Plan:

- Establish the primary or core business activity and dedicate most of your resources toward that program or grouping of programs (i.e.: artistic gymnastics for boys at all levels). Unless you have a large facility and lots of resources, you cannot effectively offer all disciplines.
- Utilize a business plan that includes the goals of the program, projected expenditures and revenues, and anticipated outcomes. Present the plan to the manager or board, as appropriate for approval.
- Establish goals and desirable outcomes for the participants in each of the programs offered.
- Create and implement new initiatives with specific goals and a business program plan in place, to capture niche markets or provide a service (i.e.: community outreach, programs for disabled children and cheerleading). Monitor the initiative to ensure that it is valuable and meets expected results. Cancel programs that do not meet expectations.

- Use the NCCP Program content to guide the design of your programs.

Program Design Tips:

- ☞ Consider facility and equipment configurations.
- ☞ Offer a variety of programs.
- ☞ Cluster similar programs together so that equipment and themes have continuity. For example schedule "little people" programs in the morning so equipment is "sized" and set-up throughout the morning.
- ☞ Design programs with levels or ways to that challenge yet ensure progress.
- ☞ Decide how achievement will be recognized, for example certificates or badges.

D.7.a.iii. Program Delivery

The most well designed program will not be well received unless efforts are made to ensure its implementation. Resources must be allocated to launch and deliver your program. Thoroughly educated coaches, parents, and registrar or receptionist will help the program run smoothly. Continuous monitoring will ensure that wrinkles are ironed out so that all involved have a positive experience.

A Checklist of Tasks for Program Delivery

1. Finalize program content, schedules, and gym and equipment use.
2. Finalize brochures, promotions and advertising.
3. Provide appropriate registration procedures (i.e.: insurance, competition entry) so participants are registered according to club, provincial /territorial, and national requirements.
4. Ensure appropriate insurance is in place for all aspects of the program and club members (i.e. injury, liability, special program activities, board of director insurance).
5. Provide training for all staff on the program content, philosophy, professional conduct and delivery (i.e.: lesson planning, athlete evaluation, parent reporting, safety considerations, spotting and goal setting).
6. Assess, evaluate, make changes, implement. Monitor programs daily, weekly, monthly and annually to improve the program.
7. Communicate program goals, philosophy and projected outcomes to parents.
8. Educate parents and participants about child and skill development.
9. Collect customer/participant feedback and be prepared to be adaptable and flexible in response to feedback.

D.7.b. Administration

D.7.b.i. Registration

Tracking members through a database is important. Examples of database software are Clublinks and Phoenix. Some clubs have developed their own software. Contact your PSO/Territory to find out what software is available and what other clubs are using.

Registration Policies

1. *Telephone Service:*

- Establish a phone system and a same day return call policy.
- Ensure an administrator is available for part of the day to respond to calls.
- Ensure the advertisement of programs and events are included on the voice message. Include a registration menu to sign up members and manage the registration list.

2. *Registration:*

- Include details of how, when, the cost, payment options and processes for payment, and cancellation and makeup of sessions. Note: It is recommended that the club produce a brochure that includes all the registration information, including insurance coverage.
- Inquire of your PTO for copies of their waiver forms if you don't have one. Make sure you find out what your club waiver form needs to include, as not all provinces and territories have the same waiver policies.
- Make sure the club completes registration with its respective PSO/Territory.
- The Administrator should do the class list management.

D.7.c. Budgeting Process / Financial Management

Sound financial management is integral to the health of the club!

A club that boasts fantastic programs and great human resource management may still fall into difficulty unless its financial management follows first-rate business practices.

- The board of directors is ultimately responsible for the financial health of the club. The board may empower the director/manager to operate the club's day-to-day financial business.
- Usually the board Treasurer oversees and monitors the completion and reporting of financial statements and the creation of annual budgets. Ensure financial policies and procedures are in place, for example, signing authorities and other security information.

The Treasurer should have accounting knowledge, if possible, and the person doing the bookkeeping should be trained.

- An accounting software program will be needed. If these resources are not available to the club, contract out the accounting and bookkeeping duties. Ensure the accounting package includes payroll. Examples are: Simply Accounting and Quick Books Pro.
- Create a budget based on previous year's needs and requirements, and consider projected changes. The final draft should be checked and rechecked to ensure all aspects of the club operation are included.
- Design a chart that has columns for the financial reporting in years or seasons, for example:
 - Projected Budget: This proposes the financial expectations for the coming season.
 - Actual Budget Results: This reports the actual results as the season unfolds to enable comparisons to projections.
 - Previous Budget Period Actual Expenditures and Revenues: This allows the current season results to be compared with the results of the previous season.
- Consider creating departments for various areas of the business (e.g. administration and programs). In each category you will project or report revenues from all sources and expenses in all areas as they relate to the specific departments. A summary of these departments will be required to determine the "bottom line".
- Create a balance sheet to report the club assets and liabilities. It will be used to keep an account of current earnings. Earnings will be accrued over the expenditure period.
- Create a cash flow chart to monitor the peaks and valleys of earnings and expenditures, and to monitor cash and spending timed with appropriate income periods.
- Compare budget to actual revenues and expenditures to assess how programs and administration are performing compared to the budget. Watch for variances and take measures to ensure that negative variances are addressed.
- Create a capital budget plan to budget for gymnastics and office equipment. Separate budgets will also be made for your gym meets and fundraising events, but these items may be included as budget lines in your overall budget.

D.7.d. Facility Management

Your facility is the base of all of your activities and also a place of business. Finding suitable space through a rental or purchase plan, and managing your gymnastics centre is a task requiring a lot of volunteer and staff effort. Many factors need to be considered, and maintaining the space once you have it will be a high priority for your club.

D.7.d.i. Facility Acquisition

One of the most common complaints heard in the gymnastics community is that the gyms are inadequate for the activities that clubs would like to host. The poor economy is often a reason given, and it is an enormous task to secure, change, move, enlarge, or build a gymnastics centre. Next to wages, facilities are the highest club expense. It is very difficult to find a suitable facility. Additionally, the nature of volunteer led not-for-profit clubs is such that continuity of funding and securing bank confidence is an issue.

Most clubs simply do not have the financial ability to build or rent the ideal space, so most clubs operate without it. Creative solutions are needed to make the space one has to work effectively. Usable spaces are often found in warehouse districts, where large, mostly open facilities can be found with reasonable rental rates. Church halls, old bakeries or gymnasium spaces, and hockey arenas are other examples. Smaller set-up/takedown operations are often located in school gyms and community centre gyms. Costs for these vary from no cost to very expensive.

It is important to explore creative partnership opportunities. Look for partners in the community to provide in-kind or cash support.

The standard gymnastics centre would have the following features:

- A large open area for equipment and activities, and pillar free is definitely a preference.
- High ceilings are a requirement, from 6 to 9 meters. Some areas may have lower ceilings if the specific activities do not require the apparatus heights, for example recreation and warm-up activities. Some provinces/territories have suggested and/or enforced ceiling heights. Make sure you inquire about these regulations.
- An area for administrative delivery: office space for reception, coaches and managers
- A lobby or viewing space, like a mezzanine for parent viewing and gathering
- A boys and girls change room
- A men's and women's washrooms
- Parking for staff and members

Nice to have would be:

- Located in neighborhoods where people live
- Located handy to public transit
- Located close to other facilities: schools, community centres or other sports centres like pools and skating rinks
- Windows placed so that direct sunlight and glare are not issues, but daylight can enter

- Auxiliary spaces like dance rooms, martial arts space, kitchens, multi-purpose rooms for camps and meetings
- Adjacent park or green space to allow indoor and outdoor activities
- Ground level or loading dock capacity
- Capacity to host events and appropriate audience seating
- Lockers for staff and participants

Leasing

It is recommended that you obtain the services of a real estate agent to locate your gym. Make sure that you read and understand the fine print in your lease agreement before you sign. Consider the length of time you would like to be in this location before you lock into a long-term lease. You will want the facility to respond to your immediate program needs, and if possible have room for growth.

Establish the respective club and leasing company responsibilities. Find out what you can expect the landlord to do, for example, maintenance, ensuring the building and safety codes are met for the building or facility itself, health needs and signage. Will the landlord install washrooms and at whose cost? Will the landlord provide garbage pick-up, or will the city provide this service? Is parking available according to city zoning and is it free?

Use the services of a lawyer to review your lease. Make sure you preview the lease to clarify details about its length, renewal, respective responsibilities, taxes, renovations, utilities, and management fees. Don't sign anything until the terms are to your complete satisfaction and until you fully understand the possible ramifications.

You must meet fire and health codes. Find out the steps that you need to take to ensure proper coverage, and then put up all the required signs on and around your site.

Building Your Own Gym

Building your own gym is a very intense and complex undertaking. The financial costs, there are countless volunteer and employee hours needed as well as the services of many professionals. There is a very long list of people and organizations that you will negotiate with, including bank officials, city officials, contractors, architects, planners, neighborhood clubs and park boards.

The benefits of building include:

- It is designed and built for gymnastics.
- There is some choice in location.
- The club has a permanent home.
- It creates an asset and legacy for the club.

The challenges:

- It is very time consuming as it can take years of planning and fundraising.
- It can be very expensive, as it needs to have enough space for future expansion.
- Long-term maintenance costs can be high.

D.7.d.ii. Facility Design

Most gym designs are governed by the restrictions of its space. Creative problem solving and thoughtful execution of a design will maximize the space for all activities while ensuring safety.

Experience is one of the best assets in this task. Many equipment companies will offer design support services to clubs. Use scale drawings and perform multiple exercises to arrive at your final plan. An audit of all the activities and functions that need to occur in the facility will be your guide to design for the many needs for the space.

It is important for clubs to develop recommendations for setting up equipment. Check with your PSO/Territory to obtain suggestions and policy information about facilities and equipment.

Considerations for the Gymnastics Gym Set-up

There are options to improve the space for specific program delivery by virtue of the equipment set-up in the gym. Based on the pure physical dimensions of the gym, some aspects of equipment set-up will be obvious. For example:

- If there are pillars, equipment will need to be set around them. Landing areas should not be compromised.
- If there are variances in ceiling height, low-level activities should be under the lower ceiling areas.
- Fire exits must remain clear.
- Ensure there is easy access to and from the gym and change rooms, washrooms and lobby area.
- Use space saving equipment strategies like over-lapping bar cables and attaching training apparatus to the walls.

Program Delivery Considerations

- Consider traffic flow of athletes moving from event to event. Is the vault runway placed such that it is not crossed to reach another event?
- Can you arrange equipment to ensure ample landing areas? Do walls need to be padded?
- Provide appropriate landing surfaces under and around the apparatus. If the landing areas are shared coaching and athlete education will be needed to avoid collisions.

- Are you able to offer an area specifically dedicated to recreational activities like “mini”-equipment set-ups, small floor area, mini-pits, slides and the like?
- Are there areas to store portable pieces of equipment such as landing pads, beat boards, recreation shapes, hoops, beanbags and parachute boxes?
- Provide delivery spaces for staff such as a music station with storage, shelves for binders, first aid supplies, schedule and information boards, white and black boards for instructional use.

D.7.d.iii. Facility Maintenance

In addition to maintaining your lease agreement and relationship with your landlord, the facility itself will require constant maintenance. Whether you lease or own your space maintenance costs need to be budgeted. You can hire professionals, such as cleaners and painters, but in many cases volunteers or staff take on these jobs. Some maintenance jobs will require immediate action, while others can be scheduled on an annual or monthly basis. The utilization of volunteers will be key to ensuring that maintenance is carried out appropriately so that safety and health standards are met.

Most maintenance will include the following:

- Maintenance and renewal of insurance for equipment and facility use or damage
- Cleaning of all spaces
- Equipment lubrication, repair and safety checks
- Lighting and electrical maintenance
- Plumbing maintenance
- Computer/copier maintenance
- Outside entrance maintenance (i.e. salting stairs)
- Upkeep: Painting, carpeting, repairs and renovations

SECTION E: CLUB COMMUNICATIONS

E.1. The Thread Linking Club Activities

Most club activities should have a communication element. Whether you are promoting a new program, service or event, talking to a potential sponsor, resolving a problem or taking registration, good communication is critical.

Clubs need to communicate to:

- Persuade, attract, and sustain members, volunteers, partners, sponsors and stakeholders
- Support revenue generation and program activities
- Inform and prevent misunderstandings
- Increase awareness

Communication planning is not a mysterious art. It is a straightforward, step-by-step process that will help clearly and logically summarize what you want to say to your intended audiences and map out how you will deliver that message or information. The same process is used to launch a new program, to inform parents about a bake sale to raise funds for their child's gymnastics travel fund or to write a speech for the Rotary Club.

A communication system and process, however simple, needs a certain level of capacity. Whether staff or volunteer run, needed is time, effort, some human and financial resources and skills. A calendar of events posted on the bulletin board, simple as it sounds, needs to have information collected, drafted and reviewed, posted and followed up.

E.2. The Importance of Effective Communications

E.2.a. Communication Supports the Club Business Strategy

- Communication is an integral part of the overall positioning of the club, its programs, products, services, programs and revenue generation efforts.
- It reflects the club's mission, mandate and values in many forms for different purposes.
- It is a necessary vehicle that allows the club to be competitive, to promote the club, to attract and sustain members, sponsors, partners and media. Communications can tap into the thinking, energy and creativity of members and staff to develop a 'competitive edge.'
- It is a means to reach, educate and enrol both inside (members, customers, participants, clients, partners, staff and volunteers), and outside (the public, media, potential sponsors, and government departments).

E.2.b. Communication Supports Change, Growth & Development

- It spreads the word that action is being taken.
- It is a tool for team building and participation.
- It helps build commitment and ownership through interactive communication activities and information.

E.3. The Six Basic Steps Of Communication Planning

E.3.a. Step One: The Audit: Taking Stock of Your Current Situation

It is important to think about your current situation. An inventory of club communication activities helps point out areas where the club may be falling short and where new ideas or revisions are needed.

Begin your communications planning by reviewing your current communication activities and gathering some pertinent information. You can do this in a formal or informal manner, from surveying your community to find out what people know about the club to talking with people that come to the club to register for a program.

E.2.b. Step Two: Setting Goals and Objectives

Defining your goals and objectives (the 'what' you are trying to achieve) makes the job of figuring out the 'who, why, when and how' of your communications planning a lot easier!

For example:

- Are you seeking to provide new information about a new program or policy?
- Are you trying to get people to do something, such as register for an event?
- Are you seeking to change behaviour? Perhaps you want to ensure people are on time for their sessions.

Your objectives should form a clear statement of what it is you are trying to do. They should be: specific and measurable (i.e. 'time and date stamped', percentage of improvement or numbers), realistic and listed in order of importance. This way a club can measure and evaluate actual results against objectives.

E.3.c. Step Three: Determining Target Audiences

The next step in the planning process is to determine your target audiences by listing the groups with whom you need or want to communicate.

A list of Potential Target Groups or Audiences

<p>Current Members, Customers, Parents and Volunteers</p> <p>Local Community Groups and Leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chamber of Commerce ▪ Farm clubs ▪ Community service clubs & Officers ▪ Veterans associations ▪ Cultural/religious groups ▪ Youth groups ▪ Sport, recreation and active living groups, teams ▪ School Boards, Superintendents, Principals, Parent Councils, and Schools ▪ Clergy <p>Mass Communication Representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Newspaper editors and publishers, key reporters, Radio and TV station managers, news directors, key reporters and announcers 	<p>Government Officials and Elected Representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mayor, local government officials ▪ Police officials ▪ Local MP and MPP <p>Business People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doctors, Dentists, Pharmacists, Veterinarians ▪ Lawyers ▪ Suppliers ▪ Construction companies ▪ Bankers ▪ Engineers and architects
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E.3.d. Step Four: Crafting Key Messages

Taking into consideration your objectives and target audience(s), identify the essential idea or set of ideas that you want to communicate.

Questions to Help Identify the Key Messages	<i>A Sample Key Message)</i>
What do your audiences need to know about your club or the particular issue or situation at hand?	The lease is up and we may need to move.
What does the audience need to know?	There may be implications to fees if the lease increases.
What do you want to tell them?	The management and board are lobbying hard to prevent an increase.

How are they likely to react to your message and why?	Parents will be affected the most and they may decide to not encourage their kids to join, thus registrations may fall.
What are some factors influencing the audience that receives your message?	Many families in our community are out of jobs because of recent cuts to the pulp and paper company.
Are there any difficulties you might have in communicating with respective audiences (i.e. teens)?	Apathy is the worst possibility. We need advocates and a strong show of support for the centre.

Keep in mind that to motivate people, you must demonstrate that you will meet their needs. A clear description of the benefits to your audiences will help ensure that your message is received, understood and acted upon.

E.3.e. Step Five: Developing the Communications Strategies and Implementation Plan

Strategies: (What to do)

Describe what it is that you need to do to meet a particular objective.

A Sample Objective: To create opportunities to recognize and promote participation of our corporate partners in club events.

Tactics: (How & Who)

Make a list of all the actions and activities for each strategy. Assign people their tasks, and discuss with them the expected results.

Sample Tactics:

- Preparing a mailing list (data-base), writing a news release or media advisory.
- During a meet, for example, responding to media inquiries.

Timing (When)

Timing is another very important consideration when choosing your communication vehicles. You don't want your messages competing unnecessarily with other events, nor sent materials out too far in advance of an event.

Budget (How Much)

Finally, there is the budget. Don't let a limited budget discourage you. There are many inexpensive ways to communicate.

Theme

Your communication plan may work well with a theme to tie it together. The theme or 'tag line' should be a short, punchy version of your main message and it should be a consistent link among all your activities and materials.

E.3.f. Step Six: Evaluation

Monitoring Progress

If you develop a long-term plan, be sure to build in some check points to monitor progress and aid adjustments.

- How will you know if you are successful? Will the audiences receive the messages you sent?
- How did your plan work with the various audiences? Where were your best and not so good results?
- The evaluation of your first plan should be used to help build the next one. Like all planning, there is a cycle, and the evaluation kick-starts the renewal of the next one. You can talk to people, use program evaluations or other club surveys, look at increases or decreases in club initiatives (i.e. sponsors, program and event attendance, and monitor media coverage).

E.4. Components of a Communication Plan

E.4.a. Internal Communications

It is important that information flows easily and regularly to and from the club 'family'. If people feel out of the loop, if they are missing key pieces of information, if information is not timely and clear, you can expect problems to crop up. Decisions may be taken that do not serve the group, and valuable resources and time can be lost in people and money!

Internal communications are usually more frequent and detailed. They can be structured and unstructured (i.e. coffee bar & the grapevine).

Examples of Vehicles and Tools for Internal Communications

VEHICLES:

- Electronic
- Print
- Face to face

TOOLS

- Bulletin Boards
- Meetings
- Reports
- Minutes
- Promotional materials & letters
- Sympathy & congratulatory notes
- PA system for Announcements
- Video's
- Fact sheets
- Invitation notes
- Communiqués/
Newsletters

E.4.b. External Communications

External communication activities need to be developed in partnership with the other areas and activities of the club, for example, marketing and program strategies. Needed also are strategies and action plans to support communications heading out of the club to reach the public, media, community groups, government or the business sector. These strategies are about, for example increasing awareness, educating the community or advocating to address and issue or to change a tax policy.

E.4.b.i. Public / Community Relations

Public and community relations are two important elements of external communications, although, of course externally developed strategies also reach club members, participants and volunteers.

A public relations strategy:

- ☞ Supports fund raising and marketing activities
- ☞ Increases community awareness
- ☞ Enhances member recruitment and retention
- ☞ Enhances or changes public perception and the reputation of the club in the community.

E.4.b.ii. Examples of Vehicles & Tools for External Communications

Print Materials (Good for conveying details)

- Brochures/pamphlets/publications
- Posters
- Newsletters
- Annual reports
- Fact sheets
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs), News Releases

Government Relations

- Regular contact with key municipal officials
- Add government officials/offices to your mailing list

Media Relations

- Radio and TV, regular contact with journalists
- Mailing lists (must be well maintained)
- Electronic releases (video, audio)
- News conferences
- Talk shows
- Information kits (background information, news releases, PSAs)
- Community newspaper: Letters to the editor, Feature articles

Community Relations

- Mall displays
- Presentations to groups, service clubs, town hall meetings
- Personal contacts
- Gymnastic centre tours

SECTION F: RISK MANAGEMENT

F.1. Description of Risk and Risk Management

Risk is defined as “ the chance of injury, damage or loss”. Risk Management is also defined as reducing the chances of injury, damage or loss by taking steps to identify, measure and control risk. It is important that the concept of risk management be introduced and policies developed to ensure a safe environment for all the people who interact on any level with a club (i.e. competitors, participants, volunteers and coaches). Information and policies dealing with risk management will increase the overall level of awareness, while it minimizes risk. Coaches will be more informed and prepared to operate within the provincial and national structure. Solid regulations and guidelines govern the safe practice of the gymnastic disciplines.

Each club needs to complete a risk management audit and utilize the risk management policies within respective provinces/territories.

F.2. Key Components of a Risk Management Strategy

<u>Insurance:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Liability<input type="checkbox"/> Accident<input type="checkbox"/> Building and contents	<u>Program Safety:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Coach certification<input type="checkbox"/> First aid certifications<input type="checkbox"/> Criminal record checks<input type="checkbox"/> Coach to student ratios<input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Safety<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision for travel or special events<input type="checkbox"/> Screening volunteers	<u>Codes of Conduct and Ethics:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> For coaches<input type="checkbox"/> For parents<input type="checkbox"/> For athletes
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Clubs should contact their provincial or territorial gymnastics association for policies and procedures for any or all of the above risk management policies and information. Inquire about mandatory and optional policies, and link to related Internet sites to obtain information. Once developed and approved, the policies and procedures need to be circulated and posted, and where appropriate, club personnel need to receive education and/or training.

More information about facility and leasing liability is included in the operations section.

SECTION G: REFERENCES

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