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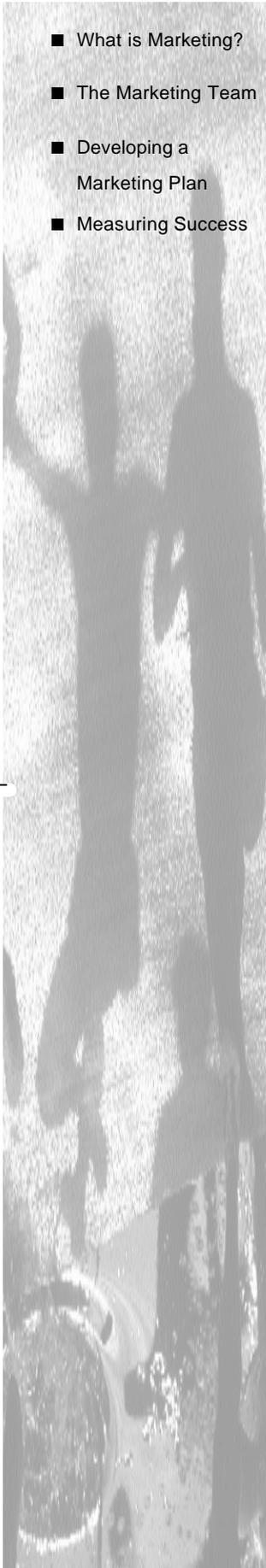
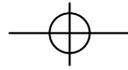
MARKETING AND MASS COMMUNICATION



PART ONE
*BASIC
MARKETING*

PART TWO
*WORKING WITH THE
MEDIA*





- What is Marketing?
- The Marketing Team
- Developing a Marketing Plan
- Measuring Success

PART ONE BASIC MARKETING

Marketing has become a rather fashionable and sometimes misunderstood term in recent years. Perhaps, because it is so visibly linked with commercial activities or because of a certain mystique which has developed around it, the idea of marketing can be intimidating. However, it does not need to be so. Marketing is a key aspect of running a national athletic federation well. It is closely linked with communication, fund raising and sponsorship. As such, it is the basis for promoting the federation and its activities and securing the resources it must have to function. Therefore, it is vital that the leaders of federations have an understanding of the basic aspects of marketing so that they can contribute to the planning and implementation of marketing activities.

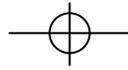
A What is Marketing?

Marketing can be simply defined as matching up a product or service and its customers. It is a process which integrates producing, distributing and selling goods or services. For commercial companies it is obvious why marketing is important. If they cannot get someone to buy what they make or do (their products or services) they will not earn any money – and eventually they will go out of business. For a national athletic federation, however, the need for marketing may not seem so clear.

Yet why not? Marketing is, and always has been, the way federations have attracted the members, funds and other support they require in order to function. For example, at the very least, all federations provide services to their members – that is why they exist. How they decide what these services should be, set a price for them, promote them and persuade people (potential *customers*) to take advantage of them, is marketing.

Broadly speaking, the long-term aims of a federation and of a marketing project are the same – to develop a strong culture of athletics. This culture includes people of all ages competing, attending athletic events, following the sport through the media, etc. Marketing can assist work towards this aim by:

- Creating and maintaining a positive image for the sport and the federation.
- Increasing overall participation.
- Increasing membership in clubs or the federation.
- Increasing the number of coaches and officials.
- Recruiting volunteers to help administer the federation.
- Recruiting volunteers to help stage competitions and other activities.
- Engendering support from the public for fund raising.
- Increasing attractiveness to potential sponsors.
- Maintaining loyalty.



B The Marketing Team

Marketing should be an ongoing priority of every federation. At any time, some marketing related activities should be taking place or, at the very least, preparations for such activities should be underway. For this reason, it is important to appoint a person or a group to be responsible for planning and implementing marketing projects. Often this role is taken on by the General Secretary. However, while it is certainly helpful if the General Secretary has marketing experience and assists with the work, having responsibility for both marketing and his or her other important duties means that neither will get the full attention they require.

Ideally, federations will have a team responsible for marketing, media relations and sponsorship. The head of marketing should report to the federation's Council on a regular and frequent basis.

Those involved in marketing should be energetic and committed to the success of the federation.

By working together, they should build a team commitment and ownership of the ideas they ultimately want to implement. Ideally, a marketing team should include individuals with links to the federation's functions in the following areas:

- **Leadership** – To provide a link to the overall development strategy of the federation and the ability to make things happen.
- **Meetings and events** – To ensure that the promotion of the federation's events are fully co-ordinated and reflect its commitment to them.
- **Development, coaching and related activities** – To ensure that the federation's services are promoted and developed for the benefit of the customers and the federation.
- **Press/media** – To co-ordinate effective use of the media and other forms of communication.
- **Fund Raising and Sponsorship** – To make sure that all the federation's resourcing efforts are co-ordinated and take advantage of the marketing efforts.
- **Other appropriate individuals and groups** – To provide additional perspectives and ideas.

Developing a Marketing

C Plan

1 Overview

Like so many other aspects of running a federation, good planning can make the critical difference between successful and unsuccessful marketing. Without planning, the tendency will be to let things happen and to be reactive. However, a marketing plan is not particularly difficult to develop. The main requirement is common sense and careful thought about:

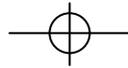
- The product or services.
- The market or potential customers.
- Communication to ensure that the two have the opportunity to come together.

The point of a plan is to take the offensive, to control the message, and to make things happen. For each marketing project a specific plan will need to be developed and co-ordinated with the plans for other projects. In general, a marketing plan should include the basic elements of a plan:

- Goals/Objectives.
- Organisation.
- Resources.
- Steps and Tasks.
- Timelines.

It is important to think carefully about the objectives for a marketing plan. By making these as specific as possible, the chances of getting the other elements of the plan right are increased. For example, if the federation's aim is to increase membership, its objective might be: *to increase the number of junior members in a given area from 150 to 200 by the end of the current year. Being specific about objectives makes it possible to do three important things:*

- **To check the realism of the objective** – Are there 50 or more kids living in the given area? Do the facilities, clubs and other infrastructure exist to serve them?
- **To choose the right products to offer** – Junior club membership, special competitions, coaching, etc.
- **To measure the success of the marketing efforts** – (see below).



There is a tendency to make objectives too broad or to try to encompass too much within one objective. It is best to treat each specific objective as a separate marketing project.

2 The product/service

Without a product/service there is no point to marketing. Therefore, a fundamental marketing task is to identify the product or service and determine its value. In other words, what is athletics and/or the federation offering customers? In the case of sport, the product is not so obvious as, say, with soap powder. However, it is possible to identify "good things" about athletics and how people could be attracted by them. Possibilities include:

- **Attributes** – Athletics is fun, it is good for your health, it is a way of meeting people, it is a family activity etc.
- **Services** – The federation provides coaching, operates a junior development programme, co-ordinates meetings, maintains records etc.
- **Events** – National championships or other meetings are exciting and fun. The interest which people have in them provides opportunities for media coverage and for sponsors to promote their products.

Any of these, and more, can be legitimate products/services. Once a possibility has been identified, the crucial thing is to make sure it really is of value, something in which a customer will be interested enough to want to fit into their business or life – by using, doing or obtaining it.

The marketing team must determine the best opportunities the federation has by analysing the strengths and weaknesses of its product/service possibilities, as well as those of its competitors (other sports and leisure activities). From this analysis the team should be able to identify what makes the federation's best products/services different and better than the competition.

If it can be shown how a product/service fits into a potential customer's business or life and how it is different from its competition, then that product/service

has value. A product/service with real value is marketable and can be the basis for a successful marketing project.

3 The market

The market for any product/service is the people or organisations likely to want to use, do or obtain it and who are willing to pay for it in some way. Remember that payment is not always the exchange of cash – it could be the giving of time. It is important to know as much as possible about the market for the federation's products/services. In other words, exactly who will be the customers?

Those people who are already taking advantage of related products/services are known as the existing market. Existing markets can be divided into "soft supporters" and "hard support". Examples of soft supporters are joggers and the people who watch athletics on television or at schools meetings. These groups may or may not have supported the federation's events and activities directly, but presumably they are interested in the sport.

EXISTING MARKETS

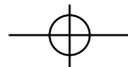
Existing markets for athletic federations could include:

- Athletes.
- Coaches.
- Officials.
- Volunteer Supporters.
- Parents/Relatives
- Spectators/Fans.
- Media.
- Sponsors.
- Local and National Government.

In addition to their demonstrated interest in the products, an advantage of existing markets is that there are usually channels for communicating with them – for example, active athletes belong to clubs, take part in competitions, read athletic publications, etc.

It is important to understand all about what motivates "soft supporters" and what common characteristics they share. This is even more true of the customers





for the federation's own products – the people and organisations who provide "hard support". By knowing more about existing markets it becomes possible to identify additional services and products which might be attractive. It is far easier to find out what these groups want and provide it than to try to find and communicate with completely new customers.

Of course, potential markets are also important. Though it is more of a challenge to market to them, it is usually necessary for the development of the federation and its products. Therefore, consideration must be given to the particular groups of people the federation wishes to attract. Groups in the market may be classified according to many different aspects or characteristics including:

- Age.
- Gender.
- Occupation.
- Educational background.
- Professional qualifications.
- Location (where they live or work).
- Other leisure activities.
- Leisure time available.
- Age of children.

By looking closely at the federation's existing customers to identify common aspects and characteristics, target groups sharing the same aspects or characteristics can be identified. The more that is known about a target group the more it becomes possible to match it with the correct product. Common sense plays a big part here, but it may also be necessary to do some informal or formal market research to learn as much as possible.

4 **Communication**

Successful marketing depends on the ability to reach all the people who make up the markets for a product/service, inform them of its availability, and persuade them to buy it. Therefore, effective communication, both to mass audiences and to carefully targeted audiences, is critical.

INTERNAL IMAGE

Research has shown that today's cynical customers discount advertising messages by as much as 90%. Direct word-of-mouth communication, however, has an inverse credibility level. The lesson for federations is that internal groups – your staff, athletes, volunteers and other members – who talk about the federation's, activities can be your most effective communication tools.

The "insiders" of every organisation have their own feelings, beliefs, perception and image regarding that organisation. These are based largely on their experience, what others in the organisation say and how the organisation projects itself to its internal audiences. Cases of negative internal image could be explained by an organisation failing to make a conscious effort to influence the thinking of its insiders.

However, many organisations have developed effective communications from the inside out. Marketing plans, therefore, should always include positive messages for internal audiences which will, hopefully, be passed outwards.

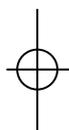
Take stock of how your federation's internal audiences see the organisation, its products and services. What can you do to positively influence their image? What can you do to encourage them to communicate positively to your potential customers?.

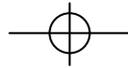
A very clear, focused message, based on knowledge of the products and target groups, is required.

A marketing message usually includes a proposition describing the "good things" about athletics and the benefits of the product, for example, 'athletics is a fun way to get fit and meet people' or 'the big meeting will be the most exciting event in town'. It must also contain supporting information about what is on offer, for example, training from certified coaches, seats in the grandstand, etc., and how these things can be obtained. Care should be taken when formulating the message to ensure that it is relevant to the marketing objectives and the target groups – if the aim is to increase family participation, then stressing top level competition will not usually be a motivating factor.

Once you have a message there are a variety of communication tools and techniques available to get to the market. These include:

- **Promotional materials** – (posters, leaflets,





brochures, etc.).

- **Direct mail** – (of promotional materials and special offers).
- **Media advertising** – (press, radio, television).
- **Publicity** – (media releases and story ideas).
- **Public relations activities** – (launches, media conferences, photo opportunities).
- **Internal channels** – (i.e. federation newsletter or club bulletin boards – these are particularly effective for existing markets).

The factors influencing the choice of communication tools made by the marketing team should include:

- **Target Groups** – What are the best ways to reach the identified target groups?
- **Cost** – Can the federation afford it? Is the communication likely to pay for itself in increased sales/membership/etc.?
- **Other Resource Requirements** – Does the federation have the manpower? Are specialist skills needed?
- **Style of Approach** – Will this activity/material reflect the right image for the federation?

Note: For more information on the planning process see Chapter 6.

LOGO AND GRAPHIC STYLE

As a general principle it is a good idea to create a logo and a single graphic style to unify all the federation's communication materials and activities. The design should be clean, bold and distinctive. Its uses include:

- Letterhead and stationery items.
- Media releases.
- Promotional materials.
- Banners and flags.
- Competition medals and diplomas.
- Team uniforms.
- Advertisements.
- Official publications (newsletter, yearbooks, annual reports, etc.).

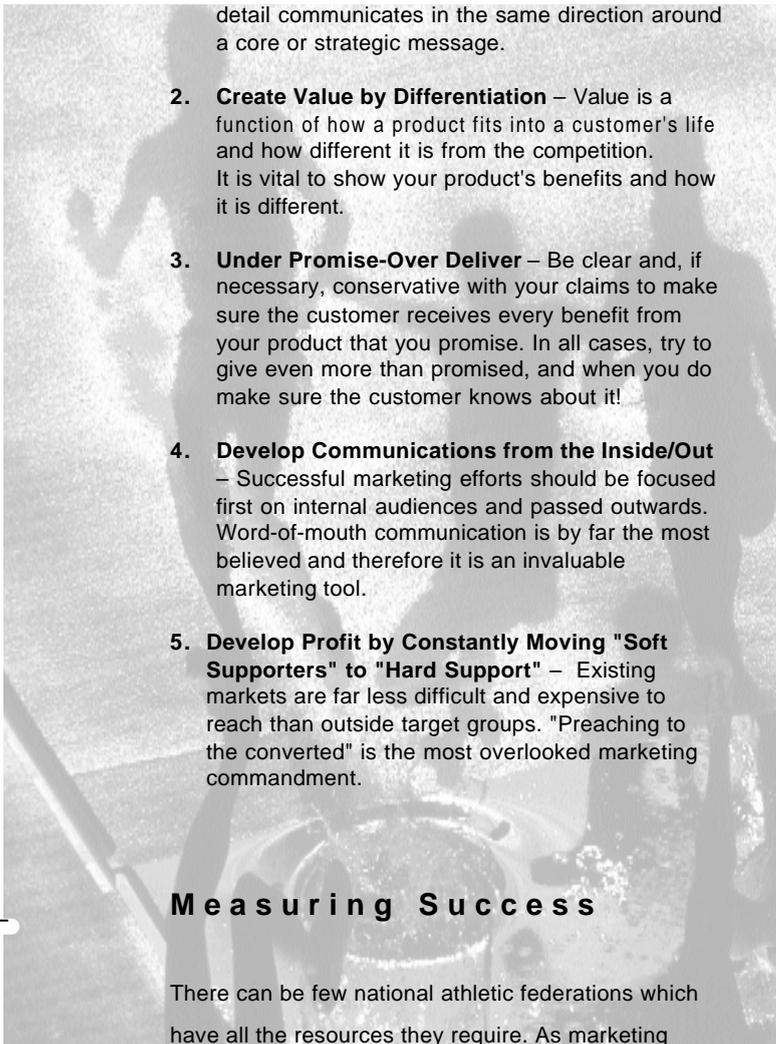
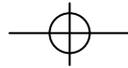
Be sure to review your federation's logo and graphics every few years to ensure they are modern and up-to-date in style – an old fashioned logo projects an image of an old fashioned organisation and will not be attractive to younger members or to potential sponsors.

5 PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE MARKETING COMMUNICATION

1. **Remember That Everything Communicates** – Every action, reaction, interaction and image, planned or unplanned, speaks to some important group within the market. In a winning effort every

MARKETING PROJECT ✓ LIST

- Project Leader appointed.
- Marketing Team identified.
- Product/service opportunities investigated and assessed.
- Marketable product identified.
- Benefits/differentiators identified.
- Clear Goals and Objectives for the project agreed.
- Resources needed/available for the project clarified.
- Current customers/existing markets researched.
- Potential markets/target groups identified.
- Message/proposition/supporting information prepared.
- Internal messages prepared.
- Communication tools and techniques chosen.
- Timing and co-ordination of activities agreed.



they heard about the product. The lessons learned through a careful evaluation of marketing activities will shape the development of future marketing plans – with gradual learning taking place through successful, and sometimes less successful, projects.

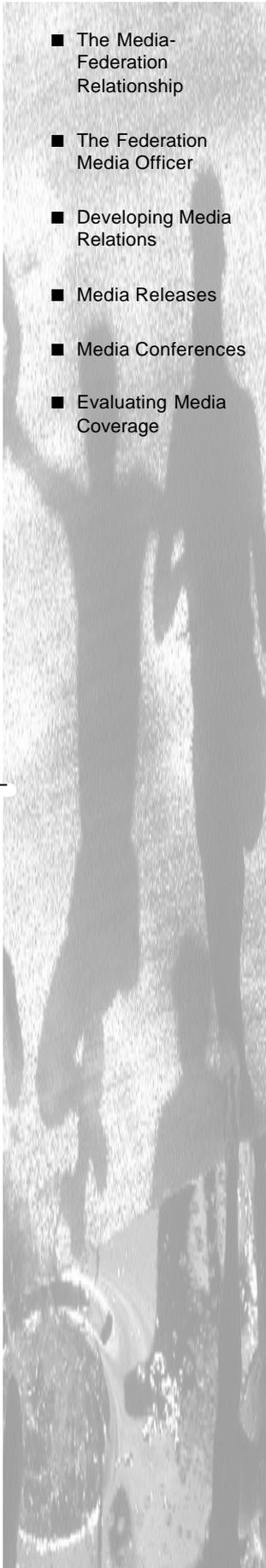
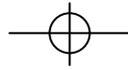
D important that marketing activities are evaluated like all other activities. Such an evaluation must examine whether or not the goals and objectives set out in the plan have been achieved and if the federation has benefitted sufficiently to justify the resources used. It should be carried out by the marketing team with input from the federation's leaders.

The factors against which the success of a marketing project can be measured include:

- Outcome against objectives.
- The actual cost in financial terms compared with the budget figures.
- The time and effort involved.

Careful consideration should also be given to which marketing tools were most effective and why.

This could involve finding a way to ask customers how



- The Media-Federation Relationship
- The Federation Media Officer
- Developing Media Relations
- Media Releases
- Media Conferences
- Evaluating Media Coverage

PART TWO WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

The media are capable of presenting sport to a vast audience. As such they are one of the most valuable marketing and communication instruments which a sporting organisation can have. The importance of the publicity and promotion which the media have the potential to provide cannot be overstated. Yet sports organisations do not benefit equally from the media. Some have working relationships which contribute to the overall success of their sport, many are virtually ignored by the media and some find the media working against their interests. By and large, a good relationship with the media is an indicator of a successful sports organisation. Because mass communication is so critical, it is also important that a federation's leaders have an understanding of how the media works and are able to support those in their organisation responsible for working in this area.

A The Media-Federation Relationship

The media includes the written press (newspapers, magazines, news agencies), broadcasters (television, radio) and, increasingly, 'new media' such as the Internet and the World Wide Web. These can be further classified as specialised or general; local, national or international; commercial or state-run. The job of the media is to disseminate information and images to their customers (readers, viewers or listeners). To do their job, the media require material which they believe will be of interest and value to their customers – and for each of the classifications listed the type of material will be different.

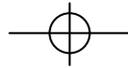
The existence of the media is a great opportunity for sports organisations. They all have a fundamental need to communicate with large numbers of people, creating dialogue with their customers and potential customers. The more people read, see and hear about athletics, the more its events and other products will be on their mind and the more likely they are to provide the support which the federation needs.

Taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the media presents a number of challenges to federations. Generally speaking, they must be able to provide information and images the media can and will use.

For their part, the media are looking for material that is:

- Newsworthy.
- Clear and precise.
- Rigorously true.
- High quality (i.e. photos that can be reproduced).

The media are also concerned when they receive materials. For example, results must be fresh, there is no use sending a daily newspaper the names of race winners a week after the event -- although a monthly magazine may still be interested. Previews and features on the other hand must fit into the schedule requirements of the publication or broadcaster. The items for which the media will disseminate material can be divided into the following three levels of priority:



1 *Top priority*

There are certain events, activities and stories which the media will go out of their way to cover. The Olympic Games and the World Championships in Athletics, for example, will always have hundreds of journalists wishing to report on them. There may also be events which, because of the nature of athletics or the media in your country, fall into this category on a national level.

In the case of top priority events, the challenge is to make sure the message which the media sends out is positive from the point of view of the sport, the organisers and the sponsors. Generally this is done by making sure the media can get to where they need to be, obtain the information they need, and have the facilities and equipment required to produce their reports. In other words: good working conditions = happy reporters, happy reporters = positive stories.

2 *Medium priority*

There are other stories which, if convinced are they are interesting, the media will cover. Important national level events usually fall into this category. The obvious challenge here is to convince the media that a story is worth their time and effort and to make sure they cover it. Controlling the message is also a consideration. Story suggestions with specially prepared background material, interview arrangements and specific invitations to events or media conferences, can all play a big role in getting the right level and kind of media coverage.

3 *Low priority*

Finally, there are stories which the media will cover only if they can be convinced are interesting and are no trouble at all – i.e. if someone else does most of their work for them. Unfortunately much of the information a federation needs to communicate in order to build public awareness and profile falls into this category.

Essentially, the task in the case of low priority stories

is to provide material the media will use and to do it better than the other organisations which are trying to do the same thing. The main tools for this are well-prepared media releases on newsworthy stories and good long-term media relations.

WHAT IS NEWSWORTHY?

Most media will be happy to disseminate almost any information if you are willing to pay them to do so. This is called advertising. Although advertising can be an important communication tool, there are no national athletic federations which can afford to meet all their communication needs in this way.

News items, on the other hand, are published free of charge. But what seems important news to a federation may be of little interest to a publisher or broadcaster. Trying to pass off information which should be advertising as news is a bad idea and will cause problems in the long term.

News must be newsworthy. A newsworthy story is something that is unusual or appeals to a wide audience – or both. Often what makes a story newsworthy is a special element or angle. Angles which are regularly used in sports stories include:

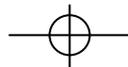
- Top Performers (Stars).
- Personalities from other fields (Music, Films & TV, Politics, etc.).
- Confrontation.
- Money.

Involving one or more of these angles in a potential story will increase the likelihood of media coverage.

B The Federation Media Officer

It is traditional for national athletic federations to have a media officer (usually called a Press Officer or Public Relations Officer) to look after the relationship with the media. Some federations have a Media Department within their office. The main responsibilities of the position should include participating in the planning and execution of the federation's marketing and communication activities and developing a mutually beneficial relationship with the media on behalf of the federation. This includes understanding the nature of stories, their newsworthiness and news value, and taking the





appropriate actions to get the information to the appropriate audience. Ideally the person in this position is a professional with extensive experience working with the media.

The specific duties of the media officer could include:

- Advising the federation leadership on the media and public opinion, as well as on the best methods for getting publicity to communicate the federation's messages.
- Briefing the federation's spokesperson(s) on a day to day basis.
- Maintaining a media contact list for dissemination of information on behalf of the federation.
- Arranging interviews between federation spokesperson(s) and journalists.
- Preparing statements and media releases on behalf of the federation and its spokesperson(s).
- Providing the media with stock information (results, statistics, policy details, historical facts etc.), answering straightforward questions and briefing journalists on the background to important issues or events affecting the federation or sport.

- Liaising with the federation's official statistician.
- Advising the media of newsworthy events and story ideas.
- Organising media conferences.
- Overseeing the production of the federation's promotional materials.
- Co-ordinating the promotion of the federation's competitions and other events.
- Co-ordinating media services at the federation's competitions and other events.
- Liaising with the PR Departments of the federation's sponsors.
- Developing a media "crisis management" plan for the federation.

Developing Media Relations



The media officer should be constantly thinking about ways to develop the federation's relationship with the media. Among other things this means demonstrating to media that the federation is a professional and competent organisation which serves the community and therefore deserves the support of the media.

Tips which should be considered by a media officer include:

- **Build your understanding** – Of the needs of the media and what makes their job easier.
- **Know and be known** – Visit the news rooms of national and local media. Talk to editors, chief reporters and reporters likely to cover athletics. Find out what they think of the sport/federation, how communication could be improved, what their deadlines and slow news days are. Listen to their ideas.
- **Get to know the most important journalists** – Even if they do not cover athletics or sport they are very often "opinion formers" and it is good if they know the sport and the federation and think positively of them.
- **Improve your output** – Make it a goal to improve the frequency/amount/quality of athletics related material that key journalists receive. If the average has been 2 or 3 press releases per month make your goal 1 per week or more. Develop a yearly plan to ensure a regular flow of information to the media. Make sure what you send out is newsworthy and looks professional.

THE FEDERATION SPOKESPERSON

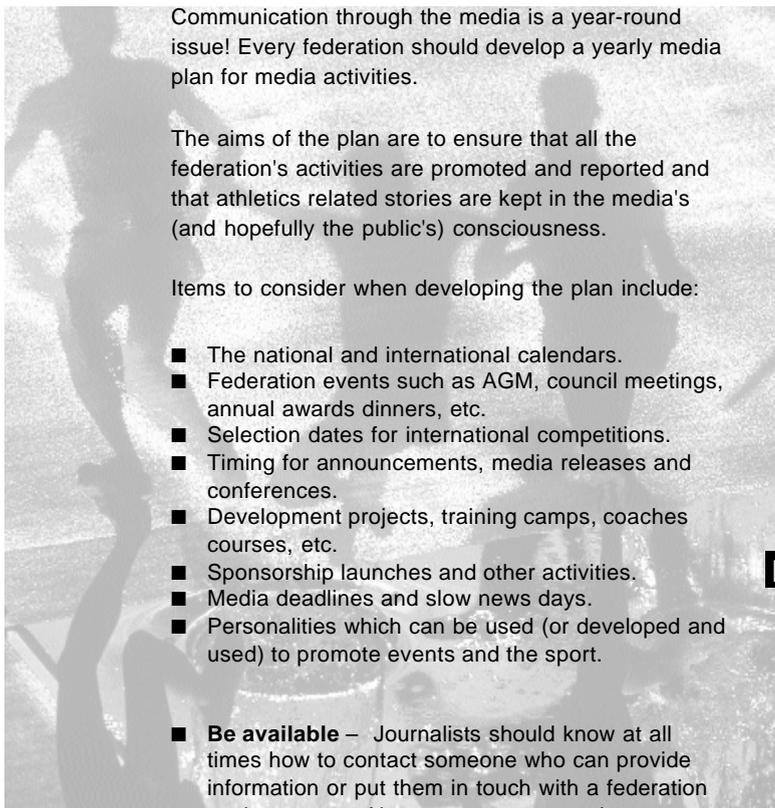
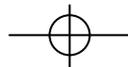
Successful communication through the media must be centralised. An organisation's messages must be sent out as clearly and precisely as possible. The more people speaking on behalf of an organisation, the more likely it is that messages will become diluted, confused or even contradicted. These can lead to marketing and communication disasters and must be avoided.

Federations should have a single spokesperson, or at most two who co-ordinate carefully, to convey all important messages through the media and represent the federation in difficult circumstances. A spokesperson must be authorised, willing and capable of taking on this role. The spokesperson's communication skills and media presence are often important factors in the success of a federation's communications. In most cases the spokesperson is the President or General Secretary, but if someone else of particular ability is appropriate they can be used.

The Media Officer's role usually includes briefing the spokesperson and providing the media with background information to support the spokesperson. All important statements and messages should be made in the name of the spokesperson or the federation.

- Developing an athlete data base.

YEARLY MEDIA PLAN



Communication through the media is a year-round issue! Every federation should develop a yearly media plan for media activities.

The aims of the plan are to ensure that all the federation's activities are promoted and reported and that athletics related stories are kept in the media's (and hopefully the public's) consciousness.

Items to consider when developing the plan include:

- The national and international calendars.
- Federation events such as AGM, council meetings, annual awards dinners, etc.
- Selection dates for international competitions.
- Timing for announcements, media releases and conferences.
- Development projects, training camps, coaches courses, etc.
- Sponsorship launches and other activities.
- Media deadlines and slow news days.
- Personalities which can be used (or developed and used) to promote events and the sport.

■ **Be available** – Journalists should know at all times how to contact someone who can provide information or put them in touch with a federation spokesperson. Never say you are too busy to provide information.

■ **Try to treat all media equally** – Big stories should be released to all media at the same time. Alternate releasing other stories first between competing newspapers or between print media and broadcast.

■ **Conduct a media workshop** – Invite key journalists from all media to discuss the sport, inside stories, issues, relations. Make sure officers of the federation and top athletes take part. Listen, discuss, build relationships -- do not lecture. Be sure to provide lunch.

■ **Produce detailed "briefing letters"** – These should cover the background to issues or events and be sent to key journalists on monthly basis. Do not expect these to be printed. They are a tool for shaping the thoughts of the journalists and creating a positive, professional image.

■ **Prepare background information sheets** – These should cover items such as the history of athletics and the federation, top athlete profiles, event data, federation programmes and services etc., and be ready for when journalists request information.

■ **Invitations** – Make sure journalists are invited to all important competitions, media conferences, sponsors' events, etc. Be sure to invite photographers specifically.

■ **Seating** – Ensure, if inviting the media to a luncheon or dinner address, that there is a place for the journalists at the meal. They should be seated as close as reasonably possible to the

speaker.

- **Recommend key journalists** – To the IAAF Media and Public Relations Department for inclusion on their mailing list.
- **Recommend key journalists** – To the National Olympic Committee to take part in Media Seminars conducted by the International Olympic Committee.
- **Present media awards** – Best journalist, best story, best coverage by a newspaper, best photographer, etc. – as a part of the federation's annual awards dinner.

Media Releases

One of the duties which the media officer will perform regularly is the preparation of media releases.

A media release is, in essence, a news story written by the media officer rather than by the journalist.

It informs the media of what is about to happen, is happening or has happened. Media releases are viewed by journalists both positively and negatively.

A real news story sent through a media release makes the journalist's job that much easier.

Erroneous, misdirected or irrelevant material in a release creates a great deal of work for the journalist, a negative reaction toward the sender and a lot of waste paper.

The successful media release attracts the journalist's attention and gives background to the story. It must be a newsworthy item and it must be presented in a format that allows for immediate use of the material.

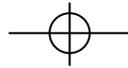
The following guidelines will be helpful:

1 Organisation

The most important part of the news story is the beginning. This lead contains the essence of the story.

It should involve six elements:

- Who is involved?
- What is happening?
- When is the time of the event?
- Where does the action take place?
- Why – possible reasons for the action or event?
- How did it happen?



The lead should be as concise as possible. One sentence is preferred, two paragraphs are the maximum.

Once the lead is written, clarify the relevant details in descending order of importance. This allows the editor to cut the story to fit his space limitations and the reader to absorb the essence of the story by reading as little as the first paragraph.

ATHLETE MEDIA WORKSHOP

The federation should consider conducting regular media workshops for athletes who are likely to receive media attention, particularly the top junior athletes. These can help to build the relationship with the athletes as the training they get on these workshops could be of long-term value to them personally. It also demonstrates to the media a level of professionalism and concern for their needs on the part of the federation.

The workshop should be run by the federation media officer and one or two professional journalists. Topics covered could include:

- The work and requirements of the media.
- Promoting a personal image, the image of the federation and the image of the sport.
- General interview techniques, coping with stress and difficult questions.
- Handling success.
- Handling disappointment.
- Recognising sponsors and other benefactors.

2 News writing

The story should support and clarify the lead. The following guidelines should be followed:

- Identify the main objective. Know the objective of the story from the start and keep the story focused on it.
- Use simple active sentences. This is best achieved through a consistent use of the active voice.
- Avoid 'dead' and 'wasted' words – be simple and explicit.
- Avoid obscure jargon. Any jargon specific to the sport should be explained and/or written out. Jargon that is not understood gets in the way of communication.
- Lists, charts, tables should be used anytime there is a large block of similar data. Statistics and

results are almost always best presented in tabular form.

- Fewer sentences per paragraph are more restful to the eye and easier to read.

3 Style

Style in this case does not refer to writing style, but to the particular publication's rules regarding spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, forms of address and so on. It is best to research the style of the intended publication and follow it.

4 Objectivity and attribution

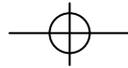
The news story is supposedly an objective report. Opinion in news writing is the prerogative of the editors, not the reporters. A certain degree of subjectivity is inevitable. What to cover, what is reported, is obviously subjective. Beyond that, however, the report must be as objective as possible. Avoid the following:

- **Opinion as Fact** – Each statement in a news story, unless it is a fact, must be attributed to some source. If not, the readers can assume it is the opinion of the reporter. There are several ways of attributing opinion:
 - Use of "according to" etc.
 - The indirect quotation i.e. the person said approximately those words or meant them.
 - The direct quote.
- **Loaded Words** – These tend to compromise a reporter's objectivity. Be aware of the connotations of words.
- **Opinionated Modifiers** – Modifiers such as "worst possible", "beautiful", "perfect", etc. tend to diminish journalistic objectivity. Avoid them. Let readers draw their own conclusions from your objective observations.

5 The mechanics of a media release

General:

- Use standard paper. Letterhead should be used for the first page if available.
- All media releases must be typed. Type on one side only. Double space each line.
- Send good copies, not carbon copies.
- Use staples to fasten pages together. Paper-clipped pages can become separated.



Release dates:

- Include a release date (and time if necessary). It provides a reference for terms like 'today'.
- Study the various deadlines to ensure optimum delivery.
- A one-line 'deadline' or summary of the content of the press release should appear above the body of the release. This helps draw the editor's attention to the story.

Layout:

- Head space: Leave some room beneath the letterhead and release date. This space is for use by the editor.
- Each page of a media release should end with a complete paragraph.
- If the release is more than one page, write "continue" and the page number at the bottom.
- Indicate the end of the media release.
- At the bottom of the media release include a reference. This is the person to whom the journalist is referred for further information. Include name, title, organisation, address and phone number.

6 Follow-up

- Make sure the media has received your release by calling at a slow news time.
- An acknowledgement of the use of the release should be considered.

Media Conferences

1 When to call a media conference

Media conferences should be called only for extraordinary events. Routine announcements are best handled by media releases. Unless the story is newsworthy, a media conference is a waste of time for the journalist. The general rule for media conferences is simple; use them sparingly. If there is any doubt about whether to call a media conference, don't call it.

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"The main advantages of a press conference from a newspaper's point of view (which is all that should be considered) are that it permits each publication to develop an individual story, facilitates questioning, and releases a news opportunity to all at the same time."

Marston, The Nature of Public Relations

There are two basic types of media conference; those called to announce some special news and those that are used to allow the media access to particularly newsworthy personalities. The publicist's job in both these cases is to facilitate communication between a primary source, the authority on the announcement issue or the personality, and the media.

A media conference should be called:

- The day before a light news day if your main target is newspapers.
- On a light news day if the main target is television.

Determine press times and electronic media deadlines before setting a time for the conference. In most countries the best time is usually around noon.

2 Invitations

Mail out invitations to a media conference two weeks in advance if possible. Follow up invitations by telephone two to three days in advance. Written invitations should follow the format of a media release. Include precise travel directions to the media conference site.

3 Facilities

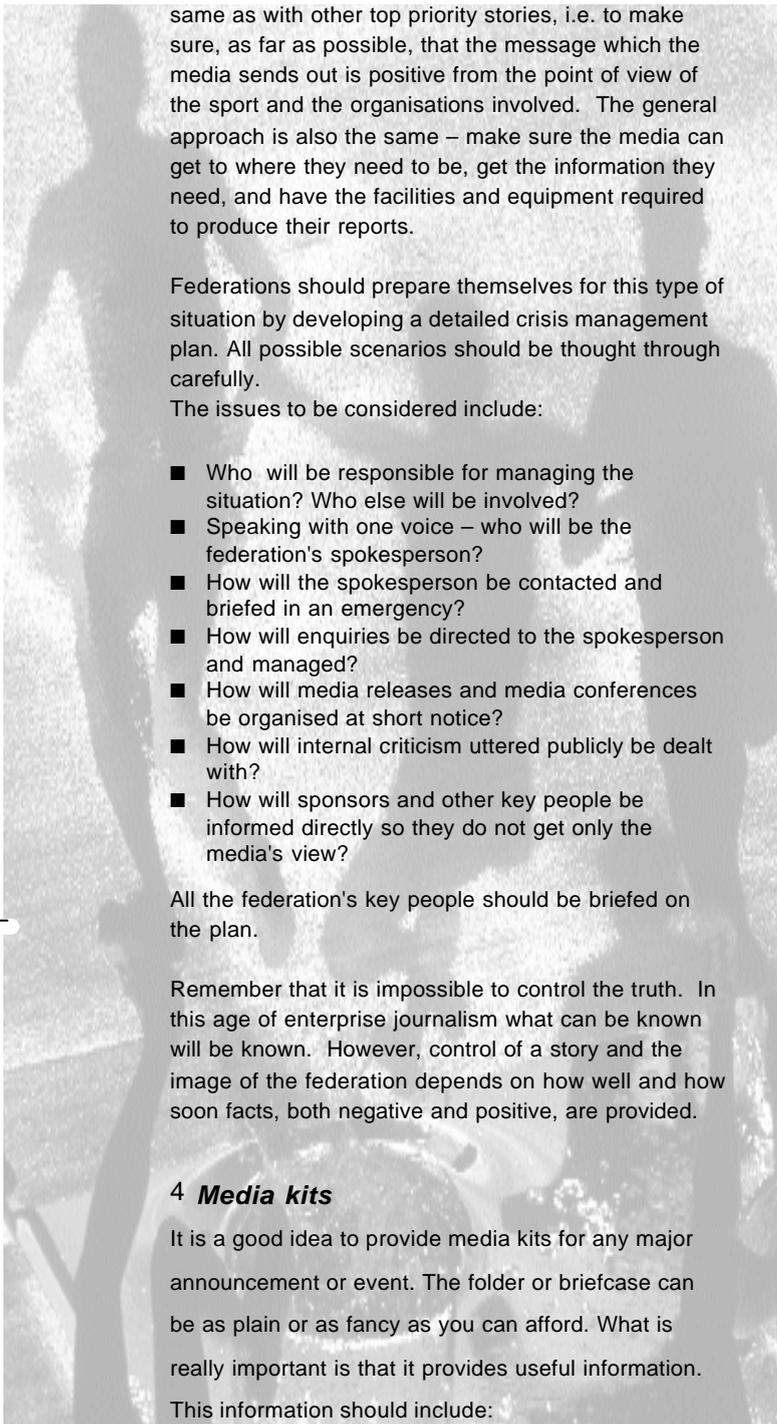
Consider the electrical requirements of television. Allow enough space for photographers, cameramen and radio equipment. Arrange a physical set-up that allows all media access to the authority or personality. A simple head table set before a seated audience is good.

"BAD NEWS"

Bad news, such as a scandal of some sort or an unexpectedly bad performance, is the type of story the media cover regardless of what is done or not done to promote it.

Though obviously more difficult, the challenge is the





same as with other top priority stories, i.e. to make sure, as far as possible, that the message which the media sends out is positive from the point of view of the sport and the organisations involved. The general approach is also the same – make sure the media can get to where they need to be, get the information they need, and have the facilities and equipment required to produce their reports.

Federations should prepare themselves for this type of situation by developing a detailed crisis management plan. All possible scenarios should be thought through carefully.

The issues to be considered include:

- Who will be responsible for managing the situation? Who else will be involved?
- Speaking with one voice – who will be the federation's spokesperson?
- How will the spokesperson be contacted and briefed in an emergency?
- How will enquiries be directed to the spokesperson and managed?
- How will media releases and media conferences be organised at short notice?
- How will internal criticism uttered publicly be dealt with?
- How will sponsors and other key people be informed directly so they do not get only the media's view?

All the federation's key people should be briefed on the plan.

Remember that it is impossible to control the truth. In this age of enterprise journalism what can be known will be known. However, control of a story and the image of the federation depends on how well and how soon facts, both negative and positive, are provided.

4 **Media kits**

It is a good idea to provide media kits for any major announcement or event. The folder or briefcase can be as plain or as fancy as you can afford. What is really important is that it provides useful information.

This information should include:

- A covering press release summarizing the highlights of the speech.
- The text of any prepared speeches.
- A fact sheet - biographical data on all featured persons or events.
- Photographs of personalities or action shots.
- A schedule of events; locations.
- The identity and involvement of any sponsor.
- General information.

5 **Audio-visual aids**

Make sure the machines involved are available and functioning properly. Audio-visual materials are certainly aids in promoting a message, but generally do not take the place of personalities.

6 **Duration**

Keep introductions and speeches to a minimum. Allow the media to ask questions. When questions begin to wane or become repetitive, bring the formal part of the press conference to a smart conclusion.

7 **Refreshments**

Refreshments are a good idea especially at a lunch-time conference. The necessity of having alcoholic beverages is questionable. It is not appropriate to serve alcoholic beverages where the guests of honour are under age.

8 **Show some flair**

Be imaginative, catch the media's attention, give them something they want to report.

9 **Thank yous**

Be sure to say thank you to everyone who helped and to those who came.

Evaluating Media Coverage

It is important to monitor and evaluate a federation's media coverage to see if its messages are being put in the way intended, to assess the quality of the media's work and to determine which material was used or not used and why. The first step should be for the media officer to maintain a daily record of media coverage related to athletics. The procedure includes the following points:

- Major publications should be monitored on a daily basis and all articles related to athletics should be

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saved neatly. Clippings of written coverage should be put on a page – normally one article or articles on the same topic per page. The pages should be organised into files – one in chronological order and one by subject.

- A log should be kept of any radio or television programmes related to athletics, or even mentioned in the news or other programmes, noting the time of broadcast, length of the item and the main points. Federations with the appropriate facilities could also collect audio and video tapes of broadcasts.

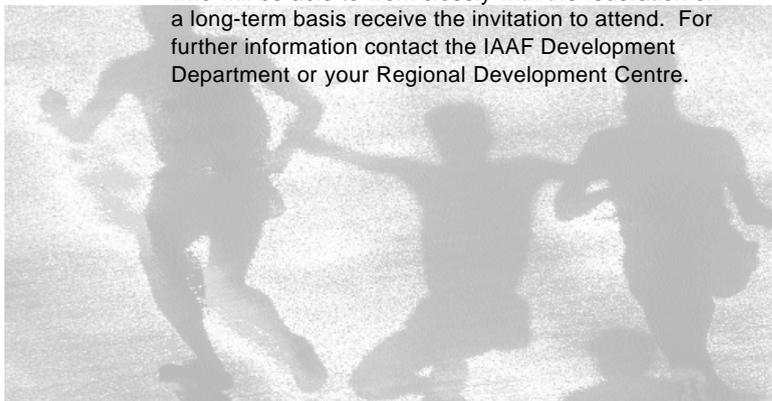
The press clippings and broadcast information should be analysed by the media officer and the federation's leadership.

Points which should be considered include:

- How are materials which are supplied to the media used?
- What are the media and public perceptions of the sport and the federation.
- Can the media coverage be used to demonstrate to sponsors and potential sponsors the level and quality of coverage which athletics and they receive?

IAAF SUPPORT

The IAAF conducts Press and Statistics Seminar to assist federations to develop their ability to work successfully with the media. The seminars normally take place at the Regional Development Centres. Federations should ensure that the appropriate individuals, i.e. Media Officers or Official Statisticians who will be able to work closely with the federation on a long-term basis receive the invitation to attend. For further information contact the IAAF Development Department or your Regional Development Centre.



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