

# Module 1: Planning Meetings. Internal and External Communication in Sports Management

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## Introduction to Communication in Sports Management

Communication can be defined as the process through which information is transmitted between two or more entities to create a shared understanding. This process may involve ideas, feelings, thoughts, and values conveyed through various channels and mediums. Michael J. Reddy, in his work *The Conduit Metaphor*, describes communication as "a transfer of thoughts and emotions via a system of symbols—spoken, written, or gestural—that are similarly understood by both sender and receiver" (Reddy, 1979, p. 290).

Effective communication is crucial for a sports director in a football organization, as their ability to convey clear and precise messages can directly influence team performance, morale, and internal cohesion. A director who communicates effectively can better manage expectations, resolve conflicts, and motivate both players and technical staff, which is essential for organizational and sporting success. According to Lombardo and Eichinger (2000), clear and effective communication is fundamental to leading high-performance teams, as it facilitates swift decision-making and aligns efforts toward common goals.

For a sports director specifically, the following points illustrate how effective and sincere communication can positively impact team management:

- **Building trust:** Sincerity is an essential component in establishing and maintaining trust. In the context of sports management, the director's sincerity not only reinforces their credibility but also strengthens trust among all organization members. This is critical when making decisions that affect not only tactical or strategic aspects but also players' personal and professional lives. Transparent and sincere communication avoids rumors and misunderstandings that could destabilize the team environment.



- **Fostering authentic relationships:** Sincere communication allows the development of genuine and deep relationships, which are particularly valuable in the emotionally charged world of sports. When players and staff feel they are spoken to honestly, they are more likely to respond with the same level of openness and commitment, creating an environment where everyone feels valued and integral to the team. This is essential for managing emotions during high-pressure and competitive situations.
- **Enhancing message clarity:** Clarity is vital in team communication, especially in sports, where instructions and strategies must be understood and executed with precision. Sincere communication eliminates ambiguities, ensuring that all team members clearly understand expectations and objectives. This helps align the team toward a common goal and facilitates coordination in implementing club strategies at all levels.

The importance of these elements is well-documented in leadership and sports management literature. As Katzenbach and Smith highlight in their study on high-performance teams, transparency and clarity in communication not only improve operational efficiency but also foster a more integrated and motivated work environment (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993).

In conclusion, here are some key characteristics of effective communication in sports management:

- **Clarity:** The essence of communication. Conveying messages clearly is crucial to avoiding confusion and misunderstandings. According to Lumby and English (2010), using simple and direct language while avoiding complex technical jargon ensures accessibility for all audiences, which is fundamental in a diverse environment like football.
- **Conciseness:** Brief but impactful. Keeping messages concise is vital for capturing and retaining attention. Weiss (2006) emphasizes the importance of "getting to the point" and avoiding digressions, as this maintains the effectiveness of communication and amplifies its impact.
- **Timing:** Knowing when to speak and when to remain silent. Recognizing the right moments to communicate is crucial, and timing can significantly affect how a message is received. Bodie et al. (2012) discuss the value of active listening and how silence can be a powerful communication tool, signaling reflection, disagreement, or the need for more information.
- **Adaptability:** Adjusting communication style. Modifying the communication approach based on the audience is key to enhancing understanding and connection. Flexibility across various mediums and the ability to communicate effectively both in person and through digital platforms are essential skills for a sports director, as highlighted by Goleman et al. (2002).



- **Mastery of football jargon:** Having a thorough understanding of football-specific terminology and jargon is critical. This not only facilitates the clear communication of strategic ideas but also demonstrates respect and understanding of the sport's professionals, as noted by Smith (2015). Knowing when and how to use football-related technical language appropriately is fundamental for a sports director.

The importance of these elements is highlighted in the literature on leadership and sports management. As Katzenbach and Smith mention in their study on high-performance teams, transparency and clarity in communication not only enhance operational efficiency but also foster a more integrated and motivated work environment (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993).

To conclude this introduction, it is worth emphasizing some characteristics of effective communication in the context of sports management:

- **Clarity:** the essence of communication. Clear communication is crucial to avoid confusion and misunderstandings. According to Lumby and English (2010), using simple and direct language while avoiding jargon and complex technical terms ensures that the message is accessible to all listeners, which is essential in a diverse environment like football.
- **Conciseness:** being brief yet substantial. Keeping messages concise is vital to capture and retain attention. Weiss (2006) highlights the importance of "getting to the point" and avoiding unnecessary digressions, as this maintains communication effectiveness and ensures that messages have a greater impact.
- **Timing:** knowing when to speak and when to remain silent. Recognizing the appropriate moments to speak is crucial, as timing can significantly influence how a message is received. Bodie et al. (2012) discuss the value of active listening and how silence can be a powerful communication tool, indicating reflection, disagreement, or the need for more information.
- **Adaptability:** tailoring the communication style. Adjusting the communication style to the audience is key to improving understanding and connection. Flexibility across different mediums and the ability to communicate effectively both in person and through digital platforms are essential skills for a sports director, as noted by Goleman et al. (2002).
- **Mastery of football-specific jargon:** A strong grasp of football-specific terms and technical language is critical. This not only facilitates clear communication of strategic ideas but also demonstrates respect and understanding of sports professionals, as Smith (2015) notes. Knowing when and how to use technical football language in the appropriate context is fundamental for a sports director.



## Internal Communication in Sports Management

### Who Does a Sports Director Communicate With Internally?

A sports director in a football club communicates with a wide and varied internal network, which includes:

- **The technical team:** Maintains constant communication with coaches and assistants to assess the development and needs of players and the technical staff, team performance, and training requirements. Communication with scouts and analysts is key to discussing potential signings and evaluating available talent.
- **Players:** Occasionally interacts with players, especially on matters related to strategic decisions affecting the team or contract negotiations.
- **Administration and club staff:** Works closely with the finance department on budget management, financial planning, and salary negotiations. Coordinates with the marketing and public relations department to promote the club's image and manages, alongside the relevant department, communication with the media. Also communicates with the medical and physical performance departments regarding players' physical condition and health.
- **The board of directors and other executives:** Keeps the board informed about the club's sports development and participates in strategic decision-making, presenting regular reports on team performance, progress in competitions, and transfer market updates.

### Definition and Objectives of Internal Communication

Internal communication refers to the strategic exchange of information, ideas, and feelings within an organization. According to Welch and Jackson (2007), it is a multifaceted tool that encompasses everything from formal communications, such as memos and meetings, to informal interactions among team members. Its objectives include improving collaboration, enhancing decision-making efficiency, and fostering a positive work environment.

### Importance in Sports Management

Effective internal communication is essential for aligning goals across various teams and departments, which is critical to the success of any sports organization. According to Cornelissen (2017), it is also vital for staff motivation and engagement and plays a key role in conflict resolution.

### Strategies to Improve Internal Communication



Strategies such as holding regular meetings, using modern digital communication tools, and fostering a culture of constructive feedback are effective for improving internal communication. These practices are recommended by Quirke (2008), who highlights their importance in dynamic environments such as sports.

### **Example of a Practical Case (Simulated)**

A sports director needs to present a dossier containing information about the club and the city to a new signing. To do this, they request assistance from the Communication Department. What should be included?

The sports director, from a communication perspective, must meet the following objectives with a new signing or employee under their responsibility:

- Facilitate a smooth integration by assigning veteran mentors to help new signings adapt to the club's culture.
- Organize welcome events and formal introductions to familiarize new players with the staff, teammates, and facilities.
- Provide clear information about the club's expectations, individual roles, and long-term vision, ensuring a comprehensive understanding from the outset.

Additionally, the Communication Department should be asked to prepare two presentation dossiers, one about the city and another about the club, which should include the following:

#### *Club Presentation Dossier*

- **History and Achievements:** A brief historical overview of the club, highlighting key moments and significant achievements. A list of titles and recognitions earned throughout its history.
- **Philosophy and Values:** Description of the club's philosophy, core values, and the mission guiding its actions. Emphasize the importance of sports ethics and commitment to the community.
- **Organizational Structure:** Presentation of the club's internal structure, including the coaching staff, administrative personnel, and other key roles. Highlight the collaboration and coordination between different departments.
- **Facilities and Stadium:** Detailed description of the training facilities and main stadium. Include images showcasing the modernity and functionality of the facilities.



- **Academy and Development:** Information about the club's focus on developing young talent. Examples of standout players who have emerged from the club's academy.
- **Fans and Community:** Summary of the fan base and the club's relationship with the local community. Include social responsibility initiatives and community engagement activities.

### *City Presentation Dossier*

- **Historical Context:** A brief history of the city, highlighting relevant cultural and social aspects. Historical landmarks that showcase the city's cultural richness.
- **Tourist Attractions:** Description of iconic landmarks and tourist attractions. Include photographs that highlight the city's architectural and natural beauty.
- **Infrastructure and Services:** Information about key infrastructure such as public transportation, hospitals, and educational services. Highlight the accessibility and conveniences the city offers.
- **Climate and Environment:** Summary of the typical climate and geographic features that make the city unique. Include information on outdoor activities and leisure options.
- **Culture and Gastronomy:** Description of the local cultural scene, notable events, and festivals. Mention the diverse gastronomy and iconic restaurants.
- **Lifestyle:** Reflections on the lifestyle in the city, focusing on aspects like the pace of life, recreational activities, and local hospitality.

## **2b. Effective Internal Communication Channels**

### **In-Person and/or Virtual Meetings**

- **Applications:** Ideal for discussing various club strategies, performance reviews, and strategic decision-making planning.
- **Benefits:** Facilitate body language and immediate reactions, key elements for effective communication (Mehrabian, 1971).
- **Challenges:** Can be difficult to coordinate due to conflicting schedules and may consume valuable time if not managed efficiently (Rogelberg, 2019).

### **Email and/or Messaging Applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Slack, etc.)**

- **Applications:** Used to share official documents, general announcements, and maintain a formal record of communications.

- **Benefits:** Provides a written record that can be referenced in the future and is accessible for people in different time zones (Baron, 2003).
- **Challenges:** Tone and intent may be misinterpreted. Not ideal for complex or sensitive discussions (Byron, 2008).

### **Digital Platforms for Team and/or Club Management (WyScout, Stats Perform, MediaCoach, etc.)**

- **Applications:** Coordination of training sessions, travel, match schedules, and quick communication between technical staff and players.
- **Benefits:** Enables instant communication and the ability to create specific groups for different topics or teams (Turban et al., 2018).
- **Challenges:** Can lead to information overload, data leaks, and distractions if not used in a disciplined manner (van Zoonen et al., 2017)..

### **Strategies for Selecting the Right Channel**

1. **Content and Audience Assessment:** Differentiate between information requiring detailed discussion (meetings) and that which can be communicated asynchronously (email, digital platforms).
2. **Priority and Urgency:** Urgent or high-priority messages may require immediate communication through calls or digital platforms.

### **Promoting Effective Communication**

1. **Training in Digital Tools:** Ensure all staff are trained and comfortable using the selected digital tools.
2. **Communication Guidelines:** Establish clear norms on when and how to use each channel to prevent misunderstandings and ensure process efficiency.

## **2c. Tools and Technologies**

In the realm of sports management, leveraging modern tools and technologies is crucial to enhance communication and task coordination. Platforms like Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Trello offer tailored solutions for the dynamic and collaborative needs of the sports industry.

### **Slack**

- **Applications:** Slack is used for instant communication among team members, enabling the creation of thematic channels dedicated to various aspects of sports management, such as training methodology, event logistics, and player welfare.

- Benefits: This platform promotes rapid and effective communication with the capability to integrate additional tools that streamline workflows, such as bots for reminders or integrations with sports management systems (Knight, 2019).
- Challenges: Managing the volume of information can be overwhelming without clear communication guidelines (Wolff, 2016).

### **Microsoft Teams**

- Applications: Effective for virtual meetings, document collaboration, and integration with other Microsoft Office applications, making it invaluable for administrative and strategic club management.
- Benefits: Its integration with Office 365 enables centralized document management and real-time collaboration, essential in fast-paced decision-making environments (Buhse, 2018).
- Challenges: May require a learning curve for those unfamiliar with Microsoft's ecosystem and depends on reliable internet connectivity for full functionality (Leidner & Kayworth, 2006).

### **Trello**

- Applications: Trello is used for task and project management, allowing sports directors and their teams to organize and prioritize projects visually.
- Benefits: Trello's intuitive interface provides a clear view of task progress, helping keep the team aligned and focused on objectives (Fried & Hansson, 2015).
- Challenges: Its simplicity may be a limitation for more complex projects requiring detailed resource management (Ferrari, 2017).

These tools represent a fraction of the available technologies for effective communication and coordination in sports management, offering flexible solutions to streamline collaboration across various club areas and levels.

## **2d. Promoting Transparency and Collaboration**

Fostering a transparent and collaborative work environment is fundamental in sports management as it significantly enhances the efficiency and cohesion of a sports team. Transparency ensures that all team members—players, technical staff, and administrative personnel—are informed about club decisions and strategies, creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and openness. This alignment of objectives facilitates effective cooperation.

Tschannen-Moran (2014) emphasizes that transparency not only improves internal communication but also strengthens trust, a critical foundation for any successful organization.



Additionally, establishing clear communication norms and expectations within the team is another effective method to foster collaboration. Developing an operations manual or communication guidelines can standardize processes and ensure that team members are familiar with best practices for sharing information and collaborating on projects. Research by Ancona and Bresman (2007) indicates that teams with clear interaction rules tend to achieve greater success, as such norms enable more structured and conflict-free collaboration.

## 1. External Communication in Sports Management

### 3a. Principles of External Communication

In sports management, external communication is as vital as internal communication, acting as the link between the club or sports entity and the external world. It is essential for maintaining a positive public image and achieving commercial and sporting success.

#### Key External Stakeholders for a Sports Director

A sports director in a football club engages with various key external stakeholders, including:

- **Media:** Maintaining strong and continuous relationships with the media is essential for managing public dissemination of club information through press conferences, interviews, meetings with journalists, and official statements.
- **Sponsors and Commercial Partners:** Strategic communication with these groups is critical to ensure financial and promotional support, aiming for long-term partnerships.
- **Fans:** Engaging dynamically with fans through social media and other digital platforms fosters loyalty and ongoing support.
- **Federations and Sports Entities:** Involves negotiations and discussions about regulations impacting the club's future, such as La Liga's Financial Fair Play rules.
- **Players from Other Clubs:** Crucial during transfer windows or when exploring potential signings.
- **Other Sports Directors:** To discuss possible agreements, transfers, or collaborations on joint initiatives.
- **Player Agents:** Negotiations with agents are essential for contractual discussions and exploring new signing opportunities.

#### Definition and Objectives of External Communication

External communication refers to the strategic exchange of information between an organization and its external environment. According to Cornish (2014), this type of communication encompasses various tactics and messages designed to project the desired image of the organization and interact effectively beyond its internal structure.



## Importance in Sports Management

Effective external communication is crucial for aligning public perception with the club's objectives and values. Argenti (2016) asserts that proper management of external communication can positively influence the club's reputation, attract investments, and strengthen relationships with stakeholders. It directly impacts:

- Financial Stability:** Enhances the club's ability to negotiate with other entities and secure sponsorship deals.
- Talent Attraction:** Improves the club's standing as a desirable destination for athletes and professionals.

## Strategies to Improve External Communication

Effective strategies include:

- Strategic Planning:** Careful planning of communication campaigns to ensure consistent messaging.
- Targeted Use of Platforms:** Leveraging various platforms to reach specific audiences.
- Crisis Management Training:** Preparing staff to handle situations that could harm the club's image. Smith and Taylor (2014) recommend continuous training in public communication and crisis management to ensure readiness for unexpected events.

### 3b. External Communication Strategies

Public relations play a vital role in managing the public image of a sports club. Key activities include:

- Press Conferences:** Organized during player signings or crisis situations, such as addressing inappropriate behavior by players.
- Event Management:** Hosting events to strengthen public engagement and project a positive image. Argenti (2016) highlights that effective public relations management shapes public perception and reinforces the club's reputation during critical moments.

### Case Study: FC Barcelona's Sextuple Win

One notable example of effective public relations was FC Barcelona's management of its image following the historic *sextuple* win. The club utilized events, press conferences, and media campaigns to capitalize on the unique achievement. Beyond celebrating the victories, Barcelona emphasized its success as a result of its homegrown talent, showcasing its academy model (*La Masia*) in contrast to the financial models of rival clubs.

This strategy not only highlighted the triumph but also reinforced Barcelona's values of resilience, development, and a commitment to nurturing local talent, strengthening its reputation both domestically and internationally.

### Figure 1. FC Barcelona's Sextuple





**Source:** FC Barcelona, 2020, <https://lc.cx/fe9nGn>

**Digital Marketing Strategy:** The online presence of a club is crucial in the digital age. Social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook allow for direct communication with fans, offering team updates, news, and interactive content that increases engagement and fan loyalty. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasize the importance of these tools in fostering fan participation and creating a strong community around the club. For instance, FC Barcelona uses Instagram to share live training sessions and behind-the-scenes moments, allowing fans to feel closer to their players and the club.

**Interorganizational Communication Strategy:** Effective communication with other sports organizations, federations, and clubs is crucial for negotiating transfers and coordinating sports events. Cornelissen (2017) notes that effective interorganizational communication can facilitate more harmonious and beneficial relationships within the industry, essential for the club's operations. An example of this is the collaboration between FC Barcelona and UNICEF and/or UNHCR, where effective communication and coordination between both organizations have allowed them to carry out joint campaigns that benefit both the club's image and the NGO's objectives.

**Figure 2:** UNHCR in collaboration with FC Barcelona



**Source:** UNHCR, 2022, <https://lc.cx/Pud5Ug>

These strategies, along with adequate crisis management training, are essential. The ability to respond quickly and effectively to crises can define how the public perceives the resilience and integrity of the club. For example, the way Manchester United handled Sir Alex Ferguson's retirement as manager was crucial. Clear communication about their succession plans helped stabilize expectations and the club's image during a potentially turbulent period.

### **3c. Crisis Management and Reputation**

Crisis management and reputation are critical aspects of sports management, where adverse situations must be handled with a clear and communicative strategy to minimize the negative impact on the club's image. A well-managed crisis can even strengthen the trust of fans and other stakeholders in the club's management. In general, these are some key aspects to consider if we find ourselves in such a dramatic situation:

**Planning and Preparation:** The key to effective crisis management is early preparation. This includes having a crisis plan that identifies potential risks, establishes communication protocols, and designates spokespeople. Argenti (2016) emphasizes the importance of preparation as a means of controlling the narrative before the crisis escalates.

**Transparent and Timely Communication:** During a crisis, it is vital to communicate openly and transparently with all stakeholders. Coombs (2014) highlights that timely

communication can reduce uncertainty and mitigate the spread of rumors that may damage the reputation.

**Continuous Interaction with the Media:** Maintaining a strong and ongoing relationship with the media is essential in crisis management. According to Smith (2015), open dialogue with the media helps ensure that the crisis coverage is balanced and based on reliable information.

**Post-Crisis Evaluation:** Once the crisis has been resolved, it is crucial to assess how it was handled and what lessons can be learned to improve future crisis protocols. Benoit (2015) suggests that this evaluation should include an analysis of the club's responses, the effectiveness of communication channels used, and post-crisis public perception. This feedback is vital for strengthening future procedures.

### Example of a Simulated Practical Case

Imagine you are the sporting director of a professional football club where the board, the coaching staff, and the youth academy management internally show strong support for your work, but the press and fans believe that you lack authority in sports decisions, that the work is not being carried out well, and that you are unprepared for it. Below is a draft of an action plan.

**To address a crisis of perception regarding the effectiveness and authority of the sporting director position, with the support of the club, it is essential to implement a meticulous strategic and communicative management plan. Here is a detailed plan to tackle and resolve this challenge:**

1. **Initial Evaluation and Strategic Planning** It is essential to conduct a thorough analysis of the situation to understand the roots and scope of the negative perception. This involves reviewing media coverage, monitoring social media, and possibly conducting surveys or focus groups with fans to gather direct feedback. This work should be carried out by the club's communication department. Based on this information, an action plan should be developed that addresses the specific concerns about the ability and authority in sports decisions.
2. **Strengthen Visibility and Authority:** To counter the perception of lacking influence in decisions, it is crucial to increase the visibility of the sporting director's actions and decisions:
  - **Regular Communications:** Publish statements regarding sports decisions such as signings, contract renewals, and game strategies, highlighting the director's role in these processes.



- **Media Presence:** Actively participate in interviews and press conferences to discuss and explain the club's decisions, demonstrating knowledge and leadership.
  - **Documentaries or Web Series:** Consider participating in documentaries or web series that show the day-to-day operations of the club's sports management, providing a behind-the-scenes look at the director's work.
3. **Public Relations Campaign:** Develop a public relations campaign designed to rebuild and enhance the sporting director's image:
- **Success Stories:** Highlight success stories under the director's leadership, such as the development of young players, success in key matches, and effective transfer market decisions.
  - **Testimonials:** Use testimonials from players, former players, and other sporting directors to support the director's competence and leadership.
  - **Fan Engagement Events:** Organize events where the director can interact directly with fans, such as Q&A sessions, to build a more personal and direct relationship.

#### 4. Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation

Implement a constant monitoring system to assess the effectiveness of communication strategies and adjust them as needed. This includes tracking media coverage, reactions on social media, and the overall sentiment of the fans.

#### 5. Evaluation of Results and Adjustments

Conduct periodic evaluations of the impact of these strategies on public perception. Adjust the approach based on results to ensure that perception is changing favorably and that concerns from fans and media are being effectively addressed. This plan will not only help improve the perception of the sports director's ability and authority, but also strengthen communication between the club and its stakeholders, which is essential for effective management and maintaining a healthy relationship with fans and the media.

#### 3d. Relations with the Media and Sponsors

Effective management of media and sponsor relations is crucial for any sports director, as these groups play a fundamental role in projecting the club's image and generating revenue. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with these stakeholders requires a strategic and proactive approach, using effective communication as a key tool.

#### Relations with the Media

Managing relations with the media requires transparency, accessibility, and regularity in communications. A sports director must ensure that the media has easy access to updated and relevant information. Cornelissen (2017) emphasizes the importance of consistent communication that is strategically aligned with the club's goals. This includes regularly organizing press conferences, sending well-crafted press releases, and being available



for interviews. To effectively manage these tasks, the sports director can rely on the club's public relations or communications department, whose expertise will be invaluable in formulating key messages and handling interactions with the media.

### **Relations with Sponsors**

Regarding sponsors, the focus should be on creating and maintaining long-term relationships based on trust and mutual benefit. Argenti (2016) highlights that communication with sponsors should be personalized and adapted to their specific needs and expectations. This may involve delivering periodic reports on the club's performance and return on investment, as well as organizing exclusive events for sponsors. The sports director should work closely with the club's marketing and commercial teams to ensure that sponsorship strategies are aligned with the club's overall strategy and provide clear added value to business partners.

### **Use of Technology and Digital Tools**

Technology plays an increasingly important role in managing relationships. Digital tools like CRM (Customer Relationship Management) can be used to keep detailed records of interactions with media and sponsors, facilitating personalized and timely communication. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) suggest that social media platforms can also be effective for maintaining an open and continuous dialogue with both groups, allowing for more direct and personal interaction.

### **Training and Professional Development**

Finally, it is essential that the sports director and their team receive continuous training in corporate communication and relationship management. This includes everything from interpersonal communication skills to negotiation strategies and crisis management, ensuring they are prepared to handle various situations and dynamics with the media and sponsors.

### **Practical Case Example (Simulated)**

A sports director is exposed to the media for the first time at a press conference. What should they have prepared?

- Know the Key Message: Before the appearance, it is crucial to identify the key message to communicate. Keep that central message and structure the speech around it.
- Anticipate Possible Questions: Prepare for common questions the press might ask. Have clear and concise answers to avoid misunderstandings.
- Be Mindful of Body Language: Non-verbal communication is crucial. Maintain a confident posture, establish eye contact, and manage gestures to support the message.
- Transparency and Honesty: Be transparent as much as circumstances allow. Honesty builds trust with the press and the audience.



- **Control Tone:** Maintain a calm and professional tone. Avoid emotional responses and steer the conversation toward the information you wish to highlight.
- **Practice Empathy:** Understand the press and audience's perspective. Adjust communication to meet their informational needs.
- **Prepare for Crisis Situations:** Anticipate potential questions related to difficult situations and have prepared responses. Effective crisis management is essential.
- **Highlight Achievements and Future Plans:** Take the opportunity to highlight the club's achievements and share future plans. Build a positive narrative.
- **Active Listening:** Pay attention to questions and comments from the press. Active listening allows for more precise and effective responses.
- **Respectfully Handle Differences of Opinion:** Disagreements may arise. Manage these situations with respect and well-founded arguments.
- **Time Management:** Keep the appearance within the allocated time. Be clear and direct to maximize the effectiveness of the message.
- **Evaluation and Learning:** After the appearance, evaluate performance. Identify areas for improvement and adjust the approach for future interactions with the press.

## Planning and Managing Meetings in Sports Management

### 4a. Basic Principles of Meeting Planning

An effective meeting in a sports context is one that is organized with a clear purpose, appropriate participants, and a well-defined agenda. The objectives of these meetings can vary but generally include decision-making, problem-solving, strategic planning, and communicating important information. Mongeau and Morr (1999) point out that clarity of purpose and prior preparation are essential for the success of any meeting, as they facilitate focused discussion and more informed decisions. In sports management, it is important to differentiate between internal and external meetings due to their different audiences and objectives.

#### Internal

#### Meetings

These involve club members, such as coaches, players, and administrative staff. These meetings often focus on daily operations, club strategies, methodology, and player development. It is crucial that these meetings are efficient and productive, as the sports staff's time is limited and valuable. The frequency and structure of these meetings should be carefully managed to avoid information overload and meeting fatigue.

#### External

#### Meetings

These involve interactions with media, sponsors, and other external stakeholders. The primary objective of these meetings is negotiation, managing the club's image, and generating revenue. Argenti (2016) emphasizes the importance of clear and effective communication in these meetings, highlighting that the ability to present the club



positively and convincingly can have a direct impact on financial support and media coverage.

### **Effective Meeting Management**

The effectiveness of meetings can be significantly increased through careful planning, which includes defining the agenda in advance, selecting participants carefully, and preparing the necessary supporting materials. Additionally, assigning clear roles to participants, such as a facilitator, a note-taker, and a timekeeper, can improve the structure and flow of the meeting. Drucker (1973) suggests that meeting efficiency is improved by limiting their duration and frequency, ensuring that meetings are only held when absolutely necessary and with a clear focus.

### **4b. Preparation for Internal Meetings**

Planning and managing internal meetings in sports management requires meticulous preparation to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of these interactions. Internal meetings are crucial for coordinating efforts and making strategic decisions within the club. Key aspects of preparing for these meetings are outlined below.

### **Define the Agenda**

A clear agenda is crucial for the success of any internal meeting. It should include specific discussion points, clear objectives, and allocated times for each topic. Mongeau and Morr (1999) highlight that a well-structured agenda helps keep the meeting focused and facilitates a more organized and productive discussion. The agenda should be distributed in advance to all participants to allow enough time for preparation and, if necessary, to provide additional discussion points or materials.

### **Participants**

The selection of participants is another critical factor for the effectiveness of meetings. It is important to ensure that all relevant areas are represented to foster comprehensive decision-making and avoid the need for follow-up meetings to address initially overlooked aspects. Harvard Business Review (2021) suggests that involving key stakeholders early improves alignment and engagement with decisions made.

### **Logistics and Technology**

The logistics of the meeting also play an important role. This includes choosing the location, arranging seating, and ensuring the availability of necessary equipment like projectors, speakers, and internet connections. In the current context where video conferences have become common, it is essential to ensure that the technology works properly to avoid interruptions. Rogelberg (2019) points out that efficient use of technology in meetings can significantly increase participation, especially when participants are in different locations. Platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet should be properly set up, and all participants should be familiar with their use to ensure smooth communication.



These elements of meeting preparation not only improve productivity during the meeting but also ensure that everyone's time is used optimally, contributing to the achievement of the sports club's organizational goals.

#### **4c. Execution of External Meetings**

The execution of external meetings in sports management is a task that requires detailed skills in preparation, representation, and communication. These meetings are crucial for establishing and maintaining relationships with external partners such as media outlets, sponsors, and other sports entities.

#### **Preparation and Context**

Proper preparation is essential to ensure that external meetings are productive and achieve their objectives. It is important to understand the context of the meeting and the specific goals to be achieved. Argenti (2016) suggests that meticulous preparation, which includes researching the participants, understanding their interests and expectations, and preparing the necessary materials, is key to effective negotiation. The materials may include presentations, financial and sports reports, club performance statistics, and other relevant documents that support the discussion points.

#### **Club Representation**

The way the club is presented in external meetings must be consistent and professional, reflecting the values and image of the brand that the club wants to project. Cornelissen (2017) emphasizes the importance of coherent communication that aligns all messages with the club's identity and global strategy. This not only involves preparing high-quality visual materials but also training the club's representatives in communication and presentation skills to ensure that the representation is effective and professional at all times.

#### **Negotiation and Communication**

Effective negotiation and communication techniques are vital for managing interactions with external partners. Fisher et al. (2011) describe the interest-based negotiation approach, which focuses on mutual interests rather than fixed positions, as an effective strategy for reaching agreements beneficial to both parties. Furthermore, the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively is essential, especially when dealing with complex or sensitive issues such as contracts, sponsorships, or media relations. Using assertive communication techniques and active listening during negotiations can facilitate more open and productive dialogue, helping to build long-lasting and trustworthy relationships.

When implemented effectively, these strategies can significantly strengthen the club's relationships with external partners and improve the club's overall public and commercial perception.



#### **4d. Tips for Successful Meetings**

Planning and managing meetings in sports management require well-developed techniques and strategies to ensure their success. Three fundamental aspects that can significantly improve the effectiveness of a meeting are encouraging participation, managing time effectively, and following up post-meeting.

##### **Encouraging**

##### **Participation**

To ensure active participation and engagement from all attendees, it is essential to implement techniques that involve each participant. Kaner et al. (2014) suggest methods such as brainstorming and small group consultations to increase participation and generate more ideas. Additionally, effective facilitation of the meeting, where attendees are encouraged to express their opinions and their contributions are validated, can strengthen engagement and collaboration. This is especially important in sports meetings where different departments or teams need to coordinate efforts.

##### **Time**

##### **Management**

Efficient time management is crucial to keeping the meeting within the scheduled time and ensuring that all agenda points are properly addressed. Rogelberg (2019) recommends establishing and adhering to a clear agenda with assigned times for each discussion item. This not only helps keep the meeting focused but also prevents the diversion and wasting of time on non-essential topics. Moreover, using a timer during the meeting can be an effective technique to ensure that the time allocated for each topic is respected.

##### **Post-Meeting**

##### **Follow-up**

Following up after the meeting is vital to ensure that agreed actions are implemented and to maintain accountability among all involved parties. Tuckman and Jensen (1977) highlight the importance of the adjournment phase in a group's life cycle, where results are evaluated, and the next steps are planned. Sending meeting minutes that include decisions made, task assignments, and deadlines helps all participants remember their commitments and fosters transparency and accountability. Additionally, scheduling a follow-up meeting can be an effective strategy to review progress and address any emerging challenges. When implemented effectively, these strategies can significantly enhance the productivity and outcomes of meetings in any sports management context.



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