



CLUB SUCCESS STORY

'ACHIEVING GROWTH AND MAINTAINING MEMBERSHIP SATISFACTION'

*Great Missenden LTC
(Buckinghamshire)*

STRATEGIES TO GROW AND RETAIN THE MEMBERSHIP BASE

Great Missenden LTC (GMLTC) has 18 courts covering a range of surfaces including grass, acrylic, clay and tarmac.

In 2015 the volunteer management committee recognised that they needed to significantly increase their membership to future-proof the club. They established a five-year business plan to grow membership from 320 to 600 by 2020 and provide a quality tennis club experience.



ACTIVITIES

GMLTC's marketing officer devised a marketing plan to attract new players and meet their membership growth goals. This included:

- Membership insight which revealed that 83% of the current members lived within a 4-mile radius of the club
- Research using the Sport England Market Segmentation tools to identify over 800 potential members, as well as competitor clubs
- Analysis to define a target audience and identify their lifestyle and interests in order to make marketing campaigns more relevant
- Defining three Unique Selling Points (USPs) for marketing messages: GMLTC is a Friendly Social Club with Great Court Availability and Great Coaching
- Establishing external partners to promote the club to their employees and customers with membership offers. The club also agreed a 4-year sponsorship deal with a local estate agent
- Mix of digital marketing, traditional marketing and events to attract new members including social media advertising, an updated website, village fair, leaflet drops and Great British Tennis Weekends.

The club also set annual net membership growth goals as part of the overall target of 600. This took into account the predicted 15-20% 'churn rate' (members who don't renew). The focus was therefore not only to acquire members but retain the existing ones.

SUCCESSSES

By early 2019, GMLTC had increased their membership to over 575 and are on track to achieving their five-year business plan.

The club now has a vibrant environment and financial resources to fund their growth ambitions. Junior club night has been revitalised and increased the number of junior players. The committee evaluates which campaigns are cost-effective and which membership offers work – for example pro rata membership fees and beginner packages.



“The biggest learning is that while it has been relatively straight forward to recruit 100 to 125 or more new members each year, the key is to hang on to them! Year-to-year retention is now a big focus for the committee.”

Neil Miller
GMLTC Chairman

TOP TIPS for a Successful Club

- Understand your members and potential members in order to engage the right people
- Align club marketing activity with the coaching provider to maximise results for both parties
- Create a simple schedule of marketing activity that the committee can access and interpret
- Reduce churn by improving the member experience and identifying members at risk of lapsing. Retain them via social events, league tennis and a coaching pathway
- Appoint a Junior Committee Officer to represent the juniors and encourage referrals

**OVER
255**
new members
in under four years

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