



CASE STUDY:

INNOVATIVE WAYS OF INCREASING
PARTICIPATION AND MEMBERSHIP

OHAKUNE SQUASH CLUB



SQUASH
NEW ZEALAND

OVERVIEW

Ohakune is a small rural town close to Mount Ruapehu with a resident population of approximately 1,000 people. Situated next to Ruapehu College, the Ohakune Squash Club houses three courts and serves the needs of the community, as well as the many tourists who flock to the region for the winter months. Looking to engage further with their local community and to improve participation growth and membership retention, the Club decided to take on a partnership approach and develop a relationship with the Ruapehu Alpine Lifts (RAL).

CHALLENGES

Location

Being situated in an isolated part of the country limits the size of growth and pool of possible members.

Benefits

Being able to offer something of value in return for support, that can be measured and will improve the relationship is a challenge for many organisations.

Sponsorship

Businesses provide resources or services in return for a benefit. This approach focuses on addressing the needs of the club and asks for a 'hand out' – rather than a partnership approach which understands what the partner is trying to achieve and offers solutions.

SOLUTIONS

Market Research

The Club were able to recognise potential partners within their region to create value propositions to allow each other to gain a benefit.

Value Proposition

By understanding what the other business wanted to achieve, the Club could then identify what they could offer the RAL staff in return for resource.

Partnership

A partnership approach was taken to work in tandem with the local community. This allowed key relationships to be developed and RAL members were offered discounted club memberships in lieu of advertising and spot prizes.

RESULTS

23

New members

10%

Of the population are members

2015

Squash New Zealand Club of the Year

CONCLUSION

Boosting club participation and membership numbers depends on the club's ability to sell programme offerings and membership packages. By adopting a partnership approach (rather than a sponsorship approach) the Ohakune Squash Club developed strong relationships within their community and were able to promote themselves at little cost in order to gain access to a group of new and potential members. This win-win situation also allowed squash to be promoted through a staff well-being programme in exchange for offering discounted memberships to RAL staff. This good commercial partnership ultimately meant that the Ohakune Squash Club and the RAL staff formed a relationship that helped both parties grow and achieve their specific goals, plus increased participation and membership in squash.