

Planning

Planning takes time and effort and to be successful needs a commitment from your management committee. However, long term it will save your Centre time and lead to successful and satisfying involvement. Remember, to fail to plan is to plan to fail.

Aims

The major aim of a planning exercise is to gather together a summary of collective ideas and agreed direction. From these ideas a plan can be developed which provides a framework within which the Centres administrators, coaches and members can operate.

It provides the chance for the Centre to take a long-term view of itself.

Following the planning exercise, the Centre will have a much clearer direction for the future. It should have a calendar of activities and events for planning as well as an operating summary for all other aspects of the Centre.

Planning takes time and effort and, to be successful needs commitment from management and members. The Centre will however, reap the benefits and rewards in the long term as it will save time and in turn lead to successful and satisfying involvement for all members.

Planning enables your Centre to:

- Set direction and keep on track.
- Increase operational flexibility to cater for changes in current members' needs.
- Increase participants especially if the Centre develops strategies to increase its visibility in the community and/or promote the Centre at local schools.
- Set out expectations for the year and spread out the workload more evenly, identify key tasks and responsibilities and seek to recruit volunteers with appropriate experience for specific tasks.
- Ensure that facilities and other resources are utilised effectively.

The Planning Process

Identifying Needs/Opportunities

What can your Centre provide?

What does the community want?

What are your Centre's primary activities?

(This is often termed a SWOT analysis – Strength, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats)

Consider some of the following influences:

School and community acceptance of the Little Athletics movement.

The nature of Little Athletics and the benefit it can give to development for all sports.

Funding sources.

The diversity of Little Athletics.

Space/facilities available – Little Athletics has the greatest number of participants on an oval at one time.

Perception that it is more difficult today to involve volunteers that in the past (eg. both parents working, single parent families, busy daily schedules etc.)

The impact that changes in school commitments for young people will have on their preparedness to commit themselves to playing sport.

Parental expectations may influence children both towards and away from some sports.

The increased diversity of sporting opportunities.

Timetabling difficulties because of the increased shopping hours effects parents, children and facility usage. (This includes the impact of young people working during traditional sporting competition times).

Increased expectation of professional presentations of sport because of television and social media.

Increased community expectation of quality, qualified coaches (this has increased the interest in coach training programs).

Promotion of health messages and the resultant increased awareness in the community of the influence of diet, activity and lifestyle on wellbeing.

Establishing Key Goals

Keep your goals simple and brief.

The goals should show where you are heading.

Decide your Centres prime functions – immediate and long term.

Set measurable, realistic and achievable goals. It is recommended that performance targets are established for the major areas of the Centres operation.

Ensure the goals respond to the needs you have identified and recognise what Little Athletics is all about.

Check that goals are consistent with what your current membership wants.

Target Market

Identify the group you can cater for.

Geographical (this will tell your Centre who to promote programs to and where to locate services and assist in recruitment activities).

Are you targeting local schools for recruitment?

What is the level of interest among volunteers?

Implementation Strategy – Making it Happen

a) What / Who

Program Delivery:

- Recruitment methods
- Competition – appropriate and relevant to age group and skill level
- Training of officials/coaches etc.
- Communication – publicity/information
- Safety procedures
- Administration – be aware of LANSW and other relevant regulations

Resources to be developed and utilised:

- Information/training
- Personnel
- Publicity mechanisms
- Finances
- Facilities
- Equipment

b) Why

- Relates to goals

c) When

- Establish critical timelines for: when events are to be conducted? Planning schedule?
- On a forward planning calendar, map out the major events and responsibilities as well as the key lead-up planning and preparatory work-times. This important process will give the Centre an indication of what it is committing itself to in terms of the spread of the workload. It may mean that you need to either:
 - change the timing of some activities
 - draw on additional assistance and resources at heavy workload times
 - determine activities of lesser importance

d) Where

- The focus of operations
- Communicate information

e) Who

- Coordinates program
- Is catered for
- The key personnel

f) Implement

g) Evaluate

There are two types of evaluation, qualitative and quantitative. One measures the quality of programs, events and competitions. The other type of evaluation will enable your Centre to have details of how many members have registered, how many children participate regularly in competitions etc.

It is desirable to all Centres to evaluate their programs using both methods mentioned above.

Getting Members Involved

It is important to get others involved in the planning process as it gives them a sense of ownership and they will become more committed to the Centre and the ideas will be more varied as a result.

There are many ways of doing this including:

- Special planning meetings
- Circulate discussion papers
- Make draft ideas public
- Survey current/potential members