



Australian Bridge Federation Inc.

MARKETING STRATEGY – 2011

Note: Document still under development

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EARLY DRAFT

Introduction

The Australian Bridge Federation Inc (ABF) is an affiliate of the World Bridge Federation (*Far East Zone 7*). It is a non-profit organization administered by a Management Committee and its headquarters are located in Canberra. The ABF has a membership of approximately 33,000.

The objects of the Management Committee are as follows:

1. To foster interest in and promote the game of Bridge.
2. To act as the national Bridge administrative body.
3. To represent Australian bridge players within and outside Australia and to maintain membership in good standing with the World Bridge Federation, the South Pacific Zone thereof, the Far East Bridge Federation and any other appropriate international Bridge organisations.
4. To interpret and apply the international laws of Bridge, to make, apply and interpret Australian laws or rules of Bridge for events organised by the Federation and to appoint the Australian "National Authority" for the purpose of the "International Code of the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge".
5. To apply and interpret any laws or rules of Bridge at the request of any State.
6. To sponsor, promote and organise Bridge tournaments including international, national and interstate championships and championships for players of different grades and to do so on its own account or in conjunction with States and other sponsoring bodies.
7. To accredit Bridge players to represent Australia.
8. To control the conduct of players representing the Federation and of participants in Federation tournaments and to take such disciplinary action in relation thereto as the Management Committee may determine.
9. To promote, organise and administer an Australian Masterpoint scheme and to determine which Bridge clubs and Bridge players are entitled to participate in and be registered under that scheme.
10. To sponsor promote and conduct training schemes for tournament directors, Bridge teachers and other officials engaged in the conduct of tournament Bridge.
11. To purchase, hire or lease real or personal property for the purpose of carrying out any of these objects and to appoint trustees to hold such property on behalf of the Federation and to indemnify any such trustees against any personal liability in respect thereof.
12. To raise funds for the purpose of carrying out any of these objects and in so doing to borrow moneys and secure the repayment of loans by way of mortgage or charge over any of the assets of the Federation from time to time.
13. To invest any surplus funds of the Federation in accordance with clause 22(5).
14. To do anything which is incidental or conducive to the attainment of any of the above objects.

In December 2010 the ABF Management Committee appointed a National Marketing Coordinator to lead and coordinate the marketing of bridge in association with the States and Territories and their affiliated clubs. This appointment took effect on 1 January 2011. This position will work closely with the Marketing Liaison Officer (*the principal liaison between the ABF and its various sub-committees*) and will Chair the Marketing Sub-Committee.

The main responsibilities and duties of the National Marketing Coordinator include:

- *monitoring the use of ABF Marketing Grants allocated annually to the States and Territories*
- *managing the development and delivery of specific marketing campaigns*
- *promotion and marketing of the ABF in the wider community*
- *promotion of ABF events; and*
- *supporting or producing development and educational programs, lessons, material, publications or other aids designed to encourage participation in the game.*

The ABF National Marketing Coordinator position attracts a retainer of \$10,000 per annum. It is not a full-time position.

This marketing strategy sets the ABF marketing goals, defines the target markets and describes how the ABF will go about positioning itself to achieve advantage over its *competitors*. The constituent parts of the strategy are based on developing a thorough and objective understanding of the current situation and includes:

- **the scope of the ABF** : This information is provided in the vision and mission statements which explain what the ABF is about and where it is going. *(This is currently under development)*
- **market objectives**: the size of the membership the ABF is seeking to achieve, ie market share.
- **target segments and positioning**: the specific membership groups or segments the ABF is targeting and the current position in those segments.
- **marketing mix** : the 'products', price, place and promotion that the ABF is using as '*marketing tools*' to deliver benefits to its members and beat competitors (*competitors generally perceived to be golf, lawn bowls and chess clubs*).
- **internal data**: capability assessment of all affiliated clubs *(Internal capability is being assessed at the moment – from the club questionnaires recently completed by a small % of clubs)*

Implementation of marketing activities will be dependent upon the establishment of a marketing officers' network. This will consist of interested volunteers in each State and Territory working in partnership with the ABF National Marketing Coordinator to design, develop and implement marketing activities in their Region. Without this network being established it is unlikely that the ABF will achieve its marketing goals. Operational capacity is critical to the success of this Marketing Strategy and the Marketing Plan. *(Establishment of this network is a work in progress – request has issued to each State and Territory to establish a network in their Region).*

ABF marketing approach

It is important to establish a shared understanding of the approach to marketing in the ABF. Whilst the terms *product orientation*, *selling orientation* and *marketing orientation* may be well understood, reconsideration of the terms ensures a common starting point for this strategy. A *marketing orientation* is the preferred approach for the ABF.

A *product orientation* would involve focusing on the basic offering and a belief that the best marketing strategy for increasing membership would be to improve the quality of what is being offered. A *selling orientation* equates the marketing task with persuading target audiences that they ought to accept the offering – that it is superior to any alternative activities/hobbies. A *marketing orientation* espouses the opposite approach. Whilst the ABF should not ignore its own goals, preferences, strengths and weaknesses; these concerns should not outweigh member/non member's interests. It is essential, therefore, to understand the motivations and interests of both our members and non-members so as to develop effective marketing strategies and activities.

A marketing orientation means that the ABF aims all its efforts at satisfying its members. Instead of just trying to get members and potential members to *buy/accept* what the ABF and its affiliated clubs offer, the ABF is committed to meeting what members and non-members need, to the greatest extent possible.

ABF strategic management planning is undertaken by the ABF Management Committee. This involves matching the organisation's resources and its market opportunities. This includes planning not only for marketing activities but also for the master point system, research and development, and other functional areas.



Diagram 1. The Marketing process

The National Marketing Coordinator is responsible for the development of both a Marketing Strategy and a Marketing Plan in partnership with marketing officers appointed by the States and Territories. These documents will need to be approved by both the ABF Marketing Sub-Committee and the ABF Management Committee.

It is envisaged that the National Marketing Coordinator will work collaboratively with the States and Territories in the design, development and implementation of marketing activities in future. In addition, the National Marketing Coordinator will need to work collaboratively with the National Teaching Officer.

The ABF Marketing Strategy and Marketing Plan will need to be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect '*learnings*' from the intelligence capturing processes to be put in place for both existing and potential members.

ABF SWOT Analysis

Every business has strengths and weaknesses. The ABF marketing strategy must take account of how strengths and weaknesses will affect its marketing.

A SWOT analysis combined with market research will help build a picture of our reputation in the 'marketplace'.

Strengths

Weaknesses

A mind sport that research shows has mental health benefits

The game does not make it easy for potential adoptees of the game to take it up (ie how do you get started).

A mind sport that has considerable benefits for players of all ages

Complex rules and regulations for the game

Found to improve academic performance in the young

There is a steep learning curve for people wishing to take up the game

A game where you meet and socialise with people

Proliferation of complex systems is a turnoff to many inexperienced players

Cheap source of entertainment

Rudeness at the bridge table turn-off for people who have come to the club for an enjoyable experience

Bridge is recognised as a mind sport by the IOC

Reliance on volunteers

Good support from clubs in marketing the game and maintaining players

Increasing legal complications and legal framework

Ability to attract support from external funding sources as a not-for-profit organisation.

Lack of resources to encourage professionalism in all areas ie players, teachers, directors etc.

Strong brand acceptance in Australia through tournament circuit

Documented policy and procedures in all areas.

Strong interpersonal relationships with international community

Tournament calendar is crowded and may not be well synchronised with overseas events and may be perceived as squeezing out club/State events

Generally well accepted organisation of Australian tournaments

Risk that some current bridge tournaments are a bit 'long in the tooth' and lack of formal survey/feedback mechanisms to guard against this

Successful organisation of previous world bridge events eg World Youth 2005, Yeh Cup 2009, PABF Congress 2008

Masterpoints system is old and fragile

Perception (at least) that masterpoints awards are biased against matchpoint scoring

Weak IT Management

Low recognition/image outside bridge community

Opportunities

Threats

Internet bridge an access to a younger demographic
Research supports the premise that it delays the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's in the elderly

An aging population, with time on their hands, who could be attracted to the game which offers the opportunity of social interaction, mental stimulation and health benefits and entertainment

Internet Bridge

As a not-for-profit organisation there is an opportunity for tax free status
Approach Federal and State Governments for project grants

The significant un-affiliated bridge players and the large potential population to increase membership

Technology innovations

education

Gain international recognition by running a future world tournament

Find a way to appeal to youth and ways to entice people back to bridge

Rationalise calendar to modernise events and sync with overseas events

Work more closely with Asia and NZ to promote bridge across regions

Other entertainment sources (eg TV, Internet, computer games etc
Perception of the game as an 'old people's game'

An aging population could mean numbers who are able to get to a bridge club will decline rapidly

Bridge does not have the spectator appeal of games like poker

All the competing interests and demands on 'limited free time'

Competition from poker/on-line games

Game may decline once old players retire unless new players are brought in and developed

Note: This process is still under way. Information incomplete as I am still awaiting input from a few management committee members. Issues will be built into the marketing plan, as appropriate, once completed.

ABF marketing priorities

In considering the Marketing Strategy and Marketing Plan for the ABF it is essential to acknowledge that at this stage limited *intelligence* is available upon which to inform strategies. This includes intelligence on member demographics, technology capability, motivation and behavior. Therefore, over the

coming 12 months, whilst progressing agreed marketing activities on behalf of the ABF, it will be necessary to build an intelligence data base so that future marketing activities can be based on research and evidence to ensure best value for the investment made.

Membership research need not be expensive but it is an essential precursor for future planning. It will be particularly important to better understand the motivation of members in terms of why they play bridge, why they play at their current frequency rate, why they do/don't compete in competitions at various levels etc. It will also be important to better understand the preferred communication channels for both existing members and potential members.

The aim of research is also to:

- develop information products more closely tailored to the needs of individual market segments (and/or sub-segments)
- identify gaps in current processes to keep people involved in affiliated bridge clubs (*it's good to get new members but we need to ensure that we keep them*)
- provide an improved insight into 'barriers' or inhibitors to social players joining affiliated clubs; and
- provide needs-based initiatives to ensure members continue to be actively involved in the bridge community.

The ABF Management Committee has outlined the following areas as goals during 2011.

1. Increase ABF membership

The task of increasing and retaining members should be easier once:

- A brand management strategy has been implemented (see goal 3). This is because the experience prospective members have in all of their interactions with ABF affiliated bridge clubs will influence directly the enjoyment they derive from bridge. The better the experience the more likely they will be to want to repeat it (*and tell their friends*).
- The ABF is able to use intelligence captured from each market segment/sub-segment to inform targeted marketing activities (see goal 2).

From a potential membership perspective, marketing activities need to be targeted at both non bridge players and bridge players who are not currently members of any affiliated bridge club. Current segmentation of these two groups is:

- youth (*people born in 1985 and afterwards*)
- people in the 27 – 65 years age group (*with particular focus on those who are about to retire*); and
- retirees.

Whilst the ABF Management Committee is keen to achieve an increase in membership numbers, it is proposed to obtain *intelligence* before developing any targeted strategies.

Table 1 shows the current ABF membership and compares it to current population figures for each State and Territory. These figures indicate a need to particularly focus attention on New South Wales (*appears to have stalled*), Victoria, Queensland (*appears to have stalled*), South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. This will, however, need be conditional upon any accommodation or logistical constraints (*eg lack of trained teachers, ability to run evening sessions for people still in the workforce etc*) and strategies being in place to retain members in these areas.

Year	ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	TOTAL
2000	706	12,458	3,628	5,997	1,710	3,246	702	119	28,566
2009	728	12,888	4,590	6,817	1,402	3,719	710	139	30,993
2010	750	12,891	4,703	6,830	1,433	3,918	708	149	31,382
Total population 01/2011	344,200	6,967,200	5,297,600	4,279,400	1,601,800	2,163,200	498,200	219,900	21,371,500
2010 membership as a percentage of population %	0.22	0.19	0.09	0.16	0.09	0.18	0.14	0.07	0.15

Table 1

At this stage, it is not proposed that a specific % increase in membership be an objective. However, a performance measure will need to be in place once research data is available and targeted strategies developed. This is expected to be possible by mid 2011.

As an example, table 2 provides indicators as an idea of what could be set for 2011.

% Increase	ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	TOTAL
½	3	64	23	34	7	19	3	7	160
1	7	128	47	68	14	39	7	14	324
5	35	640	235	340	70	195	35	70	1620

Table 2

Note: Any strategies developed to increase membership should place priority focus and investment on clubs/States or Territories with the greatest likelihood of retaining new and existing members. This will require detailed analysis of membership numbers for each affiliated club, an understanding of the capability of each club to absorb new members together with an organisational commitment to identify and implement best practice approaches to advertising, teaching and retention strategies.

2. Initiate a research program to enable more targeted marketing activities - with initial priority given to building on the ABF's understanding of both existing and potential members.

Successful planning of marketing strategies requires information – information to enable a better understanding of our members and also about potential market segments. A market segment is simply a group of present or potential members with some common characteristic which is relevant in explaining (*and predicting*) their response to a marketing stimuli. Market segmentation involves first identifying particular segments and then developing differentiated marketing programs for each of those segments. These programs may differ with respect to the marketing '*hook*', communication or distribution channels used, and advertising and selling messages. To be useful, segments must be sufficiently large to make such tailoring of marketing programs worthwhile. Segments must also be accessible through specific communication and distribution channels.

Building on the ABF's understanding of its market segments will enable the marketing stream to undertake *target marketing*. The needs of a target market segment virtually determine the nature of an appropriate marketing mix. For example, the ABF needs to listen to potential members so as to gain insights about what the target audience wants and what will get them to act. This could include motivators such as competitiveness/ collaboration / social interaction/ networking/ mental challenge/ cost etc.

In addition, understanding the demographics of our membership will assist in seeking sponsors or advertisers as we will be better positioned to clarify the audience group they will be 'reaching' with their message. We need to better understand, by Region, the make-up of our membership including average age, gender, income type etc.

It is also essential that the ABF understand its capability to deal with any increase in its membership numbers. Affiliated clubs in each of the Regions need to have sufficient accommodation as well as administrative practices which both attract and retain new members. Essentially, each club should be able to generate grassroots '*buzz*' by creating an environment which is welcoming and professional.

Any initial marketing activity should be targetted only at affiliated clubs which have the capability to accommodate and retain members. Information gathered should be able to identify which clubs fit this criteria and which clubs should be encouraged to consider new/different administrative practices so

as to become suitable candidates for marketing activity. There is no point using ABF marketing resources to attract people to beginner's classes if, from any trend data available, they are unlikely to continue once their course has been completed (*retention rates are a critical indicator*).

3. Initiate an ABF Brand Management program

Brand is the sensory, emotional, rational and cultural image or identity that you associate with an organization, product, person or issue. The fact that people remember your brand name and have positive associations with that brand makes it easier for them to select that '*product*' and enhances the value and satisfaction they gain from it. A positive brand image will also make the task of attracting sponsors and/or advertisers easier as they will want their '*product*' or '*service*' associated with that image.

The key objective for the ABF is to develop and implement a brand strategy which will evoke real emotion – it must be infused with values that compel people to repeat their experience of it at every opportunity.

Brand identity lies at the heart of an organisation's marketing. The values that define and distinguish the ABF are the platform for all marketing activities, which is why careful brand management is so important.

The ABF brand strategy must help ensure that its name is associated with a positive experience. It will require decisions which cover the whole approach to managing the ABF. These decisions will include issues such as brand personality, brand values, brand logo etc.

A good brand evokes feelings, and feelings drive actions.

Benefits from implementation of a brand management strategy for the ABF could include:

- *raising more money from major donors and foundations*
- *enhancing recognition and credibility with potential members*
- *defining and communicating a clear, compelling identity in an increasingly competitive environment*
- *increasing brand awareness*
- *building trust among employees, volunteers, affiliated clubs, sponsors, members and the international bridge community; and*
- *achieving better results!*

4. Increase the playing frequency of existing ABF members.

Targeted marketing activities for existing members will need to be informed by intelligence captured (*see goal 2*). However, it will nevertheless be possible to undertake some activities to increase their participation in bridge events (*both at club and 'event' level*) until relevant intelligence is available. This marketing plan will be reviewed and updated once intelligence is available upon which to base targeted activities. This is expected to be in the second half of 2011.

The implementation of an ABF Brand Management strategy (*see goal 3*) will be critical in achieving an increase in the playing frequency of members. This is because the more members enjoy their interactions with their bridge club and in competitions; the more likely they are to want to repeat the experience/s.

National membership of the ABF is currently around 32,000. There are affiliated clubs located throughout Australia. The key objectives relating to existing ABF members are to:

- achieve an increase in the number of times people play at their club (*particular focus is on people who currently play only once a week*)
- encourage regional marketing officers to stress with clubs in their region the importance of developing strategies to ensure they retain members (*particular focus on new members who have recently completed their beginner lessons*)
- increase participation in ABF sponsored events; and
- increase participation at evening bridge sessions at affiliated clubs in each Region.

As part of the Brand Management strategy, it will be essential to ensure that each club reviews its procedures and practices to ensure that they adhere to the espoused values of the ABF. Each member's experience in their interaction with their club will directly impact on their enthusiasm for increased contact. The aim is to make their interactions meet their expectations in terms of the game itself, the *culture* within their chosen club and their experience at regional and national competitions.

Whether people participate in bridge for the purpose of social interaction or competitiveness, their overall experience whilst at their club or tournament must be one of enjoyment. To achieve this, it is essential that they be treated fairly and respectfully. Our affiliated clubs need to ensure that their 'environment' is conducive to this outcome.

Reporting and communication

The National Marketing Coordinator will be working with, and reporting to, the ABF Marketing Liaison Officer. The Coordinator will be Chair and Secretariat of the ABF Marketing Sub-Committee.

It is envisaged that the National Marketing Coordinator will provide regular reports to the National Management Committee.

A network of marketing officers will be established in each interested State and Territory. The National Marketing Coordinator will work in partnership with each network to achieve outcomes for that Region and to develop a Regional Marketing Plan. Each of these plans will need to be endorsed by the relevant management committee for the Region.

The reporting and communication approach for the ABF National Marketing Coordinator is shown in diagram 2.

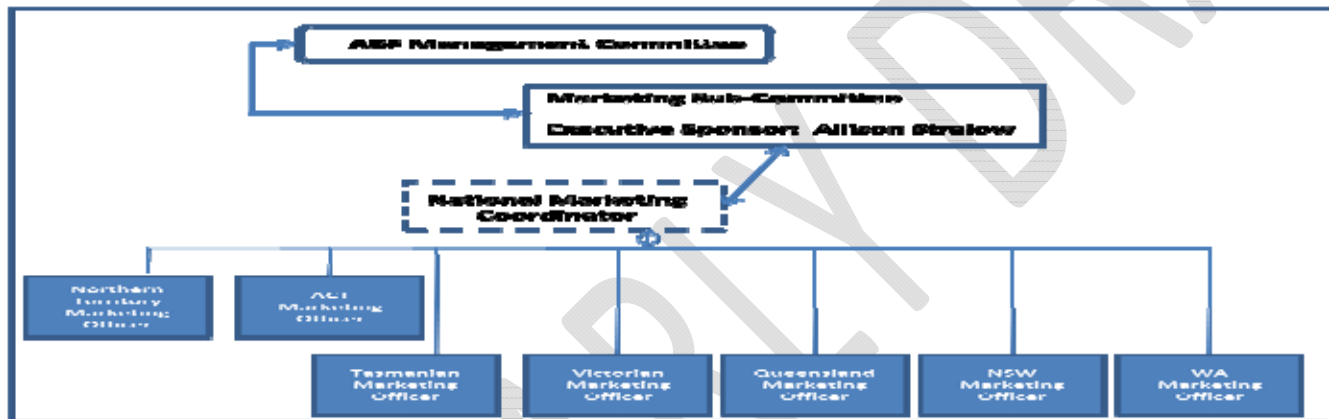


Diagram 2 – Reporting structure

Resources

The ABF Marketing Stream has an annual budget of \$xxxxxx. This allocation is currently broken up as follows:

1. \$50,000 – for marketing activities in the States and Territories
2. \$xxxxxxx – for development and marketing of training and development materials
3. \$xxxxxxx - for National Marketing activities
4. \$xxxxxxx - administrative expenses.

To raise the profile of bridge in Australia and increase the number of people both playing and learning how to play bridge, the ABF currently makes *bridge promotion* grants to each of the States and Territories. These grants are made up as follows:

Location	\$ Allocation
Northern Territory	4,000
Tasmania and ACT	6,000
New South Wales	8,000
Queensland	8,000
Victoria	8,000
South Australia	8,000
Western Australia	8,000
Total	50,000

The ABF has preferred that States and Territories either:

- *make all clubs aware that funding exists for bridge promotion including teaching and invite applications; or*
- *for regional or State-wide initiatives plan for equal access and/or equal benefits where possible.*

In the past these grants have been used for:

- posters or leaflets for local distribution
- localized or regional advertising including regional newspapers, Yellow Pages
- TV Advertising
- design and erection of new Club signage
- promotional roadshows including stalls at local shows/community events
- improved websites
- beginner's books and lessons
- intermediate and higher level teaching tours by recognized teachers
- Bridge Laws – copies provided to local clubs; and
- regional marketing or promotional officers.

To ensure that best possible outcomes are achieved for this investment, the objectives for the National Marketing Coordinator are to:

- work in partnership with marketing officers in each State and Territory to monitor the use of ABF marketing grants and report quarterly on activities and outcomes to the Management Committee (*through the Chair of the Marketing Sub-Committee*)
- identify opportunities and make recommendations to the ABF Management Committee (through the Marketing Sub-Committee) for improvements in how the ABF marketing funds are either allocated or utilized; and
- work in partnership with the National Training Officer to achieve the best possible outcomes for developing, promoting and promulgating educational products designed to build on the capability and knowledge of ABF members.

In partnership with State and Territory marketing officers, the National Marketing Coordinator is also responsible for identifying opportunities for advertising revenue, bequests, sponsorship and Government grants.

Our Market Segments

1. Youth Segment

The ABF Youth Club allows all players, 26 years of age and under at the end of the year, to be given the rights and privileges of ABF membership without having to join a State-based affiliated club. Membership of the ABF Youth Club is terminated on 1 January of the year after a player reaches their 26th birthday.

The ABF Youth Club has 256 members (as at 7 May 2010). The break-down by States and Territories is as follows:

State/Territory	ABF Youth Club
ACT	44
New South Wales	61
Queensland	26
South Australia	48
Tasmania	7
Victoria	29
Western Australia	41

Table 1

Note: The number of youth members in our affiliated clubs is not know but the National Marketing Coordinator will be seeking this information as part of a broader 'fact seeking' process. Hopefully, the number of youth in affiliated clubs will be known by April 2011.

Members of the ABF Youth Club are provided with a 50% discount on entry fees in all ABF and ABF licensed events.

At this stage, it is suggested that a 20% increase in membership be an objective for 2011. However, it may be necessary, contrary to figures shown in table 2, to aim for an overall National increase in youth numbers given the viability of implementing strategies in either Tasmania or the Northern Territory. A 20% increase on existing numbers would mean increases as shown in table 2 below.

State/Territory	ABF Youth Club	20% Increase
ACT	44	53
New South Wales	61	73
Queensland	26	31
South Australia	48	58
Tasmania	7	9

Victoria	29	35
Western Australia	41	49
Total	256	308

Table 2

SUB-SEGMENTATION

For the purpose of developing strategies to increase the number of young people involved in bridge (both Youth Bridge and as members of affiliated clubs), it is necessary to consider sub-segmentation so that strategies can be tailored to meet the different motivators and interests of 'groups' within the segment.

It is proposed that the following sub-segments represent the key areas for 2011:

1. Age group – 17 to 26 years of age.

This sub-segment relates to university students, full-time/part-time employed, part time students and to the unemployed. The focus through 2011 will be on university students.

2. Age group – 12 to 16 years of age.

Whilst this age group would almost all be high school students, it is not considered an effective use of resources to concentrate solely on high schools at this time. Rather, it is proposed that the ABF also develop strategies which are targeted at simply getting this age group interested in bridge.

It is suggested that we hold off on any concentrated effort to get high schools on board until we have evidence to show that bridge benefits the brain. It would place the ABF in a powerful negotiating position to be able to point to evidence showing that bridge improves an individual's analytical ability, development of logical thinking etc as well as the 'soft skills' of team work and interpersonal skills. Capturing any evidence is a strategy outlined in the ABF marketing plan – *responsibility rests with the National Marketing Coordinator.*

Initial enquiries with someone who used to write education policies for the Federal Government have confirmed that there is no likelihood of having bridge incorporated into the school curriculum.

3. Age group - 8 to 11 years of age.

The majority of children within this age range would not yet have the attention span necessary to learn bridge. However, there are two issues which need to be considered, namely:

- those who would find bridge too complex at this early stage would be able to learn a less complex form of the game (*eg mini bridge*) and also be able to learn other card games which would be fun. Research with youth bridge members revealed that 26/29 surveyed had played cards as a child. Whilst most played within the family environment, there is perhaps scope to encourage children to play in our club environment so that they develop an interest and enjoyment from playing card games. This may, as with our older youth players, lead to an eventual interest in playing bridge.
- children who are intellectually and socially advanced would be able to learn bridge and the game would benefit their academic ability, particularly in regard to mathematics, science and music. However, given that the majority of 8 -11 year olds would not have the ability to learn bridge, it would be ineffective to try to establish any programs within primary schools. Any children with the ability to learn the 'full form' of bridge should be identified in the club environment and a judgment made as to whether they should advance, if interested, to a higher level.

RESEARCH

The development of tailored marketing strategies for the youth segment requires research. It is necessary to understand what could motivate youth to play bridge and what the ABF could do to improve the experience of those who already play. To achieve these outcomes, it will be necessary to capture data from:

- existing youth bridge members
- young members of affiliated clubs
- non playing youth between 17 – 25 years of age; and
- non-playing youth between 8 – 16 years of age.

In addition, to open up possibilities for bridge to be welcomed into the school environment, it would be extremely advantageous to find empirical data linking bridge with a healthy (*and developing*) brain.

Research should be undertaken with youth in each of the agreed sub-segments so as to better understand how to attract them to the game.

5.1 Existing youth bridge members

During the ABF National Youth Bridge Week in January 2011 the ABF National Marketing Coordinator conducted a series of one-on-one discussions with:

- six of the youth participants
- the ABF National Youth Coordinator; and
- the convenor of the event.

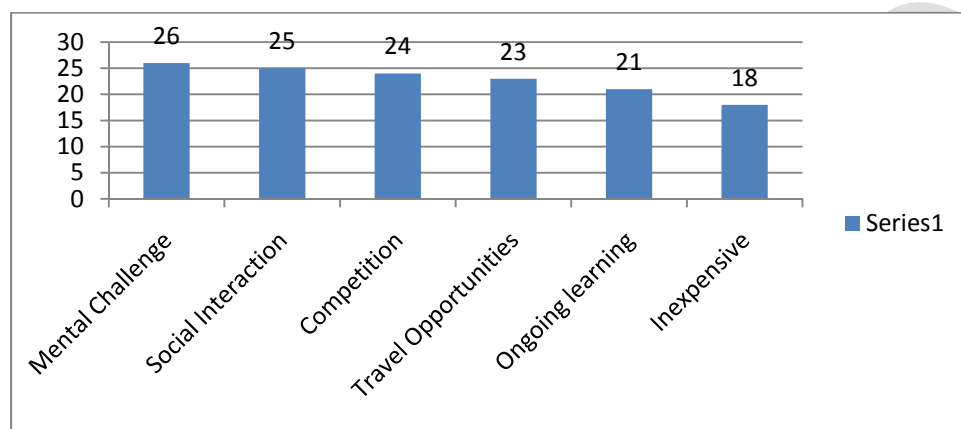
In addition, 23 questionnaires were completed by youth participants at the event.

This process was designed to understand what motivators could be used for promotional activities and products to attract young people to youth bridge. The information captured will help identify what the ABF can do to improve youths' experience in terms of training, communication, club environment etc. Analysis of the information gathered is contained in *Research : Youth Week 2011* Powerpoint document. Some of the key findings are:

Training and development - Analysis of the data captured during this process will be provided to the National Training Officer so that consideration can be given as to what ABF approaches need to be developed to teach bridge to our younger members. The main themes in this regard were:

- do not like up-front lessons – they prefer experiential learning
- would like to have a mentor (*competent and preferably young*)
- do not like learning from books – want an interactive approach; and
- whilst the majority were introduced to bridge by an immediate relative (19/29), only one sought ongoing training from this person.

Motivation to play bridge - The key motivators (*in order of importance*) for participants of Youth Week, who have an average age of 21 ½ years, are:



These six issues should be used for promotional purposes to attract youth to bridge. Important to note how close the top four issues are to each other – all are strong motivators. Another strong theme from the research was the need to have fun. Even very competitive players want to balance play with social interaction and fun otherwise they fear burn-out.

Gender imbalance - From the gender mix at the Youth Week event (at the time the research was undertaken), there appears an imbalance in favour of males (9 F and 20 M). In addition, one-on-one interviews with female attendees revealed that some felt they were, as a group, less competitive than males as they prefer to feel moderately competent before entering competitions. A couple of people interviewed mentioned that female friends had not continued with youth bridge because of the pressure to compete against much better, more competitive players.

Technology - There is a high rate of technology usage by this group. 26 of the 29 surveyed use BBO and 22 are on Facebook. Interestingly, only 1 uses Twitter. Email is also used extensively.

Analysis of data collected from Youth Week research has been built into the marketing strategies contained in the Marketing Plan – look under *Youth Segment, Sub-Segment 17 – 26 years old*.

A key observation: This segment needs to identify more as part of the ABF '*family*' if we are to transition them successfully into the broader bridge community - once they lose eligibility for membership of youth bridge. The majority of youth members are unaware of the ABF and its role within the bridge community.

From one-on-one interviews with the National Youth Coordinator and the convenor of Youth Week the following issues arose:

- the need for more participants in Youth Week to make it sustainable (*2 – 3 times more*)
- the need to increase efforts to encourage youth at local level events
- the need to have documented procedures and guidelines for organising events- *and more support in carrying out activities*
- volunteer burn-out a real issue
- the ABF management committee needs to be far more involved and interested in youth activities
- the need for a better website (*with secure access for existing members of youth bridge*)
- any high school initiatives can simply turn into child care; and
- strong need for succession planning for key ABF youth positions. Current occupants are going to be extremely hard to replace given the wealth of knowledge and experience they bring to their respective role. We need to address this as a matter of urgency.

1.2 Young members of affiliated clubs

Research with young members playing in affiliated clubs needs to be undertaken so as to understand their 'experience' of the game and what attracted them to the game. We need also to identify how to encourage them to become more involved in youth bridge activities and whether they can be 'recruited' to assist in attracting more young people to the game.

1.3 Non playing youth between 17 – 25 years of age

This sub-segment could be further segmented into:

1. non-playing university students
2. full time employed
3. part time employed/part time student (*probably most time poor in the sub-segment*); and
4. unemployed (*including disadvantaged youth*).

As the main focus for 2011 is only on university students, it would be interesting to understand what would attract them to the game.

Note: A large number of gap year or international backpackers would be included in this sub-segment. However, it is not considered viable to develop specific strategies for this transient group at this time.

1.4 Non playing youth between 8 – 16 years of age

The purpose of any marketing activities with this age group would simply be to introduce them to the world of card playing. We need to better understand what promotional material or approaches would work with this group and what they would consider 'fun' in the club environment. We also need to understand which communication channel would be best for this sub-segment and what time would be most suitable to get them involved.

2. BRAND MANAGEMENT

Research undertaken at Youth Week clearly demonstrates a strong need to address the perception of bridge as an older person's game. There is also a need to raise the profile of the ABF as it appears to have no brand (*or image*) with existing youth bridge players. To do this the ABF needs to:

- develop 'visual' promotional material for this segment which depicts young people having fun
- improve the standard of our web site as youth are much more technologically capable than our 'older' players
- develop teaching material which explains the ABF masterpoints and ranking systems
- utilize social media for marketing and training activities with this group; eg email lists, SMS texting, pod casts, Facebook etc
- acquire hand-outs (*eg ABF branded bubble pens and screen wipes etc*) which suit this segment for promotional activities; and
- provide purpose designed ABF and Youth Bridge banners and/or visual material for all youth events.

In addition, there is a need to address the behaviour of older players towards youth bridge members. Some of the issues raised during the research phase included:

- have had problems with behaviour – *but rarely from high standard players*
- they can be very rude at the table – *impatient*
- they play bridge with a different approach/style
- they get grumpy when you and friend (partner) try to have a good time (have a laugh)
- they are sceptical, get annoyed at slow play
- they are rude, they try to tell you what to do when they have no clue; and
- they are too slow. Some don't like young players – not happy to have youth at the table. This does not encourage you to return to the club.

These issues will be addressed as part of the broader brand management strategy as outlined in the ABF marketing plan. It is important that youth players are treated with courtesy and respect when playing in our affiliated clubs; just as it is important that all our members are treated appropriately.

A significant difference between our youth bridge members and possibly the majority of our club members is that youth have no interest in the ABF masterpoint or ranking systems – *at this stage*.

EARLY DRAFT