Increasing the Influence and Relevance of Squash NZ

Otago MBA 36 – Live Case Study for Squash NZ

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Syndicate C
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1. Executive Summary

Squash New Zealand (SNZ) is the national body responsible for the promotion and development of squash. The sport is declining in popularity in New Zealand which has led to reduced affiliation fees and revenue. This impacts on the ability of SNZ to effectively promote the sport and questions the effectiveness of the organization. This document provides recommendations to assist SNZ to promote the sport more effectively and increase income.

Key issues
The key issues for SNZ identified during our analysis are;

- They function as a 'club support' operation rather than a general promoter of squash.
- They see clubs and club players as their customer, rather than anyone interested in playing.
- Marketing is aimed at clubs where no new customers are to be found.
- Mostly (amateur) clubs 'deliver' squash which results in widely varying standards.

Key recommendations covered in this report
SNZ should;

- Define their customer as the squash player/unaffiliated player/potential player and align all marketing efforts appropriately.
- Develop campaigns and tournaments around this segment.
- Leverage low cost promotion channels (social media & online) to enhance its brand value through improved communication.
- Provide clubs with billing services & web space to remove unnecessary barriers for new players.
- Expand the target for marketing of the 'Pay for Play' system.
- Leverage elite players in marketing the sport to New Zealanders.

Conclusion
Squash is a fun, low cost, social, all weather sport for all ages and a fast, effective way to keep fit. There are already more than 200 clubs across New Zealand and most of them are ready and willing to receive new players. SNZ has a great opportunity to fill these clubs. To do this they must switch their main focus from the club to the unaffiliated player and **make it easy** for this segment to experience the excitement of the game. By doing so they will expand their own influence and relevance and reignite New Zealanders' passion for the sport of squash.

2. Project Background, Approach & Vision

As outlined in the preamble accompanying this live case study, Squash NZ (SNZ) is the national governing body or national sporting organization (NSO) for the sport of squash in New Zealand and, as such, responsible for the promotion and development of squash in New Zealand. They were established in 1932 and are a member of World Squash and Oceania Squash, and are administered by 11 district associations. There are around 200 clubs and 21,000 affiliated members (16,000 of which are graded players) throughout the country who contribute $450,000 per annum in levies. The total income for SNZ is around $1.2m with the difference made up of Sport NZ funding, sponsorships and grants.

*S*quash NZ has a newly formed organizational structure predominantly focused on operations. Strategic planning is currently being updated and reassessed. Membership has been steady over the last 4 years, but there was a drop of about 5% last year. Income from levies has remained steady, but it will be challenging to maintain this level in the future if membership drops even further. SNZ is, therefore, hoping to explore other revenue options that will maintain or grow the current level of income. They believe that additional products and services with advanced technological capabilities could help attract a younger audience to the sport, and would welcome the contribution of Otago University MBA students in this endeavour.

According to Squash NZ, one possible option is the further development of SNZ's IT platform iSquash. iSquash is comprised of a number of integrated modules that provide tools for SNZ's districts, clubs and members. At the heart of iSquash is a grading system that captures the results for every player on the grading list. It is a live system that is updated on a daily basis and attracts around 1,500 to 2,000 views per day. Moreover, the system includes a CRM component that allows clubs to maintain membership data, contact details, etc., but that is currently not integrated with a billing and accounting function.

Developing such an integrated billing and accounting function and promoting and selling this product to SNZ members, so that users/clubs only need to use iSquash to manage their membership, was considered one option for this live case study. Another option was to look at opportunities to improve iSquash and offer additional products and services (such as Apps for competition entry, live updates on the grading list, international squash results, news, etc.) to generate additional income from users.

In order to get a clearer idea about SNZ as an organization as well as its background and key issues, we scheduled a couple of meetings with Tony Johnston, Member of the SNZ Executive Council, as well as with Jim O'Grady, CEO of Squash NZ, and his staff at SNZ's head office in Auckland (see Appendix 1 & 2 for a detailed meeting schedule and minutes). From these very productive and positive initial meetings it quickly became obvious that the main problem SNZ is facing, i.e. a significant decline in the interest and participation of the sport in New Zealand along with an aging demographic, was not to be solved by improving the online accounting system and/or developing an iPhone app.

Rather, the main objective should be to explore innovative solutions for expanding the relevance and influence of Squash NZ in general, thereby ultimately increasing the popularity of the sport of squash in New Zealand. In accordance with SNZ senior management, we eventually defined the project's objective as identifying opportunities for enabling a significant growth in the number of squash players nationwide as well as the number of players directly affiliated with the national governing body. Key issues were to establish who exactly the customers are (and how can they be reached), what SNZ can directly control, and what increases revenue, adds value, attracts customers. Potential options we explored for that purpose included a comprehensive rebranding initiative, a stronger focus on the unaffiliated player, campaigns and tournaments, improving communication, and reviewing the current sales model as well as existing performance metrics. Based on these key issues and options we developed the following model as a basis for our study:

Following further consultation with SNZ and MBA administration as well as various meetings with squash players, squash club members and squash officials in the Otago region (see Appendix 1 & 2 for a detailed meeting schedule and minutes), we decided to focus our research and recommendations on how to reach and engage the unaffiliated player and created the following vision and objectives for our project:

- **A growth in the number of affiliated players from 20,000 to 25,000 by 2015**
- An increased popularity of the sport of squash in New Zealand
- A significant growth in the number of squash players nationwide
- Effective communication channels (ISquash Website, Forum, Facebook, Twitter)
- Strategically aligned campaigns
- Revenue generating tournaments

The recommendations in the following report are all based on this vision.

3. Marketing to the Appropriate Audience

3.1 High Level Marketing Strategy

Industry Analysis
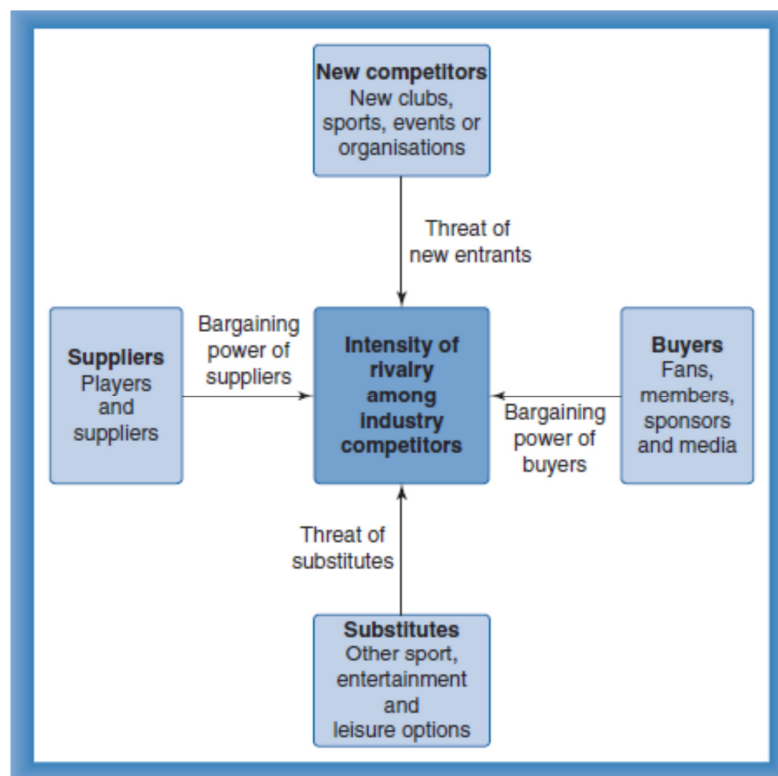
Source: 'Introduction to Sports Marketing' by A. Smith

Threat of new entrants - **LOW**	There are more than 200 squash clubs in New Zealand and it is difficult and not profitable for a new competitor to enter the market (excludes unaffiliated facilities).
Threat of substitutes - **HIGH**	Rugby is the most popular sport in New Zealand followed by other team sports. A sport enthusiast has many options to choose from in New Zealand.

Bargaining power of suppliers - **LOW**	Squash player don't have much influence over SNZ as there is little direct communication.
Bargaining power of buyers - **HIGH**	Clubs and sponsors can exert pressure over SNZ as they are a significant source of funding.
Rivalry among competitors - **HIGH**	Local clubs compete for the same set of consumers making it very competitive among them.

Marketing Objectives

Participation	• To increase the number of squash players.
	• To increase club membership.
	• To increase frequency of events & tournaments.
Performance	• To increase the range of products or services on offer to consumers.
	• To improve customer satisfaction and service quality.
Promotion	• To improve the public image of the organization.
	• To increase customer awareness of the product/service.
Profit	• To increase product or service sales.
	• To acquire new sponsorships or grants.

Value Proposition

SNZ should focus the value proposition of squash based on its benefits and attributes:

- One of the most healthy sports
- Burns lots of calories
- It's fun to play squash
- A social sport

3.2 Who are SNZ's Customers

SNZ has always focused on squash clubs as its customers. Squash players however are the real consumers of the sport. Currently SNZ is not focusing directly on the squash players. The overall strategy of SNZ is to promote squash in New Zealand. SNZ expects clubs to implement its strategy at grass root level. SNZ's promotional activities are therefore targeted towards clubs and are not focusing on squash players in general. Different clubs have different strategies to promote squash and market themselves to new players. Some clubs lack the finances and operational abilities to be able to effectively carry out the strategy of promoting squash in New Zealand. As a result the combined efforts of all the clubs fail to achieve the objectives of SNZ. SNZ should realign its marketing strategy based on its real customers, the squash players (existing as well as prospective). This new strategy will benefit both parties. The clubs will experience an increase in club membership as a result of increased enthusiasm about squash due to targeted consumer marketing by SNZ.

SNZ should try to understand the motives behind playing squash. Some major motives for begin playing squash are:

1. Squash is a very beneficial to health. Not only it is a great cardiovascular activity but also a great way to strengthen muscles.
2. It is a good leisure activity with social benefits. This is how squash clubs position themselves. Play squash, socialize with new people and have fun.
3. Squash is a competitive sport and is bidding to become an Olympic sport starting in 2020. If it succeeds consumer interest in playing squash is expected to increase.

SNZ could also focus on squash equipment manufacturers. These manufacturers benefit directly from any increase in the sport's popularity and so are equally keen to see growth. SNZ may also be able to obtain sponsorship fees by aligning with a particular manufacturer/brand.

Growth Strategy

Market Segment/Product	iSquash	Tournaments
Club Players	Current Strategy	Current Strategy
Unaffiliated Players	Recommended Strategy	Recommended Strategy

As per our recommendation, SNZ should target unaffiliated players by giving them access to the iSquash portal and thereby generating revenue from them. Along with iSquash, SNZ should also focus on tournaments for unaffiliated players.

Market Segmentation

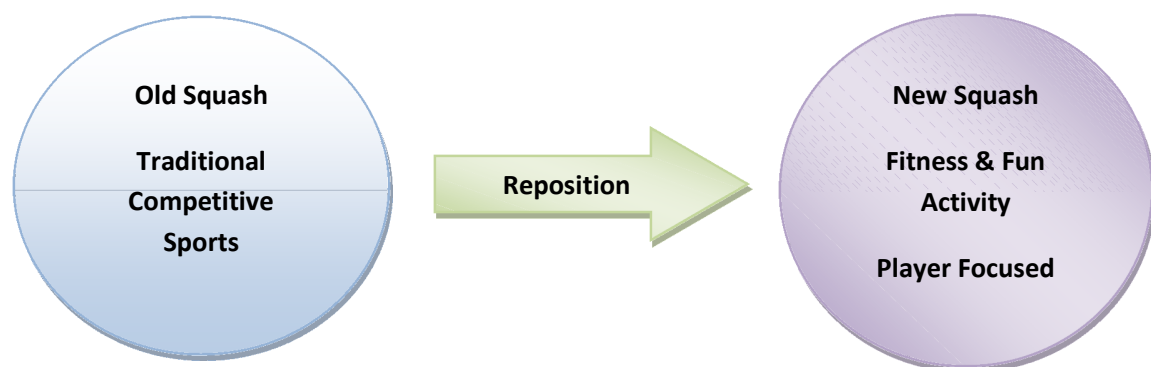| Potential Market	• Anyone who is fit enough to play or wants to achieve fitness, irrespective of age and gender.
Target Market	• People interested in playing squash casually but do not want to be associated with any club.
Positioning of Squash	• Fitness • Fun

As part of our recommendation, SNZ should focus on anyone who is interested in playing squash and not just the club members. The target market can be divided into the following categories:

1. **Students**: - Both school and university students looking for competitive as well as leisure activities. This is an attractive target segment as most kiwi school and university students are keen sports players. If squash can position itself strategically in this segment it can greatly augment the number of squash players in New Zealand.

2. **Retirees**: - Squash is a good way to keep fit during old age. Also retirees may like a forum to share their thoughts and experiences along with socializing with fellow retirees. This segment may prefer the social aspect of the game rather than competitive play.

3. **Fitness Enthusiasts**: - The gym is often the main focus for consumers nowadays who wish to keep fit. Sports such as squash can provide the same health benefits. Squash should be positioned as a way to attain fitness rather than just a sport. People in New Zealand are fitness conscious and so this represents opportunity for SNZ.

3.3 Marketing Mix and Positioning

When targeting potential customers SNZ should try to position squash as fitness and fun activity rather than a sport. Positioning based on the benefits of the game may give squash an edge over other sports. Positioning is very important for an aligned marketing strategy. All efforts on the marketing mix should be done with this positioning in mind. Squash must be clearly distinguished from other sports such as rugby.

Old Squash

Traditional Competitive Sports

Reposition

New Squash

Fitness & Fun Activity

Player Focused

Marketing Mix

SNZ should focus on the 4Ps of marketing as part of their overall marketing efforts. The 4Ps are:-

Product: - SNZ should repackage its offering as "a fitness and fun solution" for its target market segment and focus on the benefits of squash. The main products/services offered by SNZ are:

- iSquash
- National Tournaments
- Club Development
- High Performance

SNZ should try to maximize its revenues from iSquash by developing a business model to attract unaffiliated players to play squash. This is a low cost revenue generation option. The other three options are more profitable but require substantial capital investments.

Price: - SNZ must ensure that the fees clubs charge are not too low. Pricing must always be based on perceptions of value, not cost. Squash has an advantage as it is most commonly played in pairs, immediately reducing the individual cost by half. Clubs must charge a sufficient price so that they are able to maintain their facilities to a good standard and so attract more members.

Place: - SNZ should provide facilities to play squash. It can be club facilities or SNZ owned facilities. This part of marketing mix is very crucial as the success of this strategy is based on how successfully SNZ can offer its services to all the players who want to play squash but do not want long term commitments in the form of club memberships.

Promotion: - SNZ should use various promotion channels to reach its target customer segments. SNZ can choose the low cost options like social media as well as various events and tournaments as an opportunity to market its offerings to the targeted segments.

Social Media	• New Zealand youth has a high usage rate of social media • Use Facebook and Twitter as a platform to reach young potential squash players • Use interactive social media strategies • Try to connect top ranking players to future top performers • Generate informative content • Create a brand
Website	• Integrate the iSquash NZ logo with Squash NZ • Enhance GUI making the portal more contemporary • Vision statement should be on the home page
Advertising	• Use social media as preferred advertising channel • Use of print media like low cost local newspapers, magazines etc. • Tie up with squash gear manufacturers to launch online campaigns
Tournaments	• Establish partnerships with universities to conduct inter and intra university championships • Use tournaments as a tool to promote the sport in NZ • Align campaigns with tournaments

4. Connecting with the Unaffiliated Player

4.1 Sales Model

What is it?

The sales model will identify how squash is bought and sold in NZ. It includes deliverables, pricing, contract terms and payment methods.

Why review the sales model?

- To help us to understand how well the existing model is meeting the needs of the customer. This document is focused on the needs of the unaffiliated player but some issues also impact club players.
- To identify existing best practice that can be encouraged to spread.
- To identify good ideas that can be adopted from commercial practice.

SNZ should encourage clubs to use the best practice sales model.

Is the annual subscription sales model outdated?

It is accepted that consumer preferences change over time and it is possible that the traditional annual membership format of club subscriptions, which require substantial advance payment, may no longer be acceptable for some squash customers. Given the increased leisure options available some might find a 'pay as you go' model more attractive based on their lifestyle. This would require a change in thinking by clubs to ensure that the sport remains as accessible as possible to these customers. Gym membership formats can be considered as an example. Previously relying on fixed annual memberships it is increasingly common that they now offer contract-fee subscriptions to meet changing consumer demand.

SNZ measures its performance by full senior club subscriptions which do not take into account any casual/unaffiliated squash players. These play at university, council and casual courts and so are neither counted by or contribute anything to SNZ. Measuring only full senior club subscriptions does not accurately reflect how popular squash is in NZ.

Delivery

> *"…the destiny of squash still lies in the hands of the clubs. They deliver squash to those who play the game. The club's front door is the critical threshold where the product meets the customer."*
> Neven Barbour, SNZ Chair, 1998 Annual Report

SNZ is not involved in the final link in the squash sale. Delivery of the squash product is made by (mainly amateur) clubs according to their own abilities and local practices. The quality of delivery of the product therefore varies hugely, from excellent to non-existent.

Despite not being involved in this step in the sale the amateur status of many clubs make it important for SNZ to understand what the most appropriate sales model for squash is, and to communicate and share that with every club. By providing their potential customers with a best practice sales model we hope some of the non-commercial elements of existing practices can be discouraged.

(Not) open for business

Accepted theory is that a supplier must make it as easy as possible for a prospective customer to buy. Any unnecessary obstacles to a purchase should be removed as prospective customers will take every opportunity not to buy. In many cases, the non-professional club-based delivery of squash in NZ places several obstacles in the way of potential customers:-

> *"My partner has been twice to [squash club] to find out about the summer league. Both times the door was locked and she just couldn't get in".* Otago University Student, October, 2012

Many clubs have no formal reception and are often locked outside of peak hours. Prospective players may not feel confident walking into a club that does not conspicuously display a 'Open to the Public' sign. Even if the door is unlocked what if the only activity is on the courts? What if a determined prospective customer manages to approach a club member? Will they receive an appropriate response given that the member is concerned with playing, rather than selling memberships? These are all hugely important issues when considering how to make squash clubs more open and inviting to attract new players to the sport.

How clubs can best design their facilities to be welcoming to the casual player is outside the scope of this document, but it is a significant issue that should be addressed. The difficult reality is that regardless

of the success of SNZ in attracting new players to the sport they rely completely on clubs to convert that interest into active membership of the sport.

Price list accessibility

To meet prospective customer need squash clubs must have their membership pricing and details out in the public domain. Prospects want to be able to find the cost, quickly and easily, of playing squash. This perhaps is most easily achieved by placing it on a web page. Enquiries can be easily directed to this information source.

Subscription options

Clubs may be tempted to simplify their membership fee structure for ease of administration – which then becomes a block to prospective players. The market is made up of different segments that have different requirements, such as off-peak, student, social, casual, monthly, annually etc. Ideally clubs should offer a number of different membership packages to meet the market's needs. See figure 1.

Figure 1: ClubK membership options retrieved 5/11/12 from www.clubk.co.nz

This highlights a key issue with the sales model for squash in NZ, which is that club interests and player interests are not aligned. Clubs should provide multiple membership options for all segments but do not do so in all cases because they lack infrastructure, expertise and time. Prospective customers unwilling to commit can be tempted with low cost, easy-get-out memberships.

Joining fees

Joining fees are also another barrier to membership. While the customer might think it reasonable to pay a bond for a key or card, additional up-front fees are simply seen as part of the cost of the squash

membership ($50 join fee + $200 annual fee = $250 squash fee) and are an easy target for criticism. Again, the solution is to minimize any barrier that might put off a potential customer. Joining fees should be reduced by amortizing the cost over some time, and/or reducing the initial transaction cost to the club so no joining fee need be charged.

It should also be noted that replacing a $50 join fee with a simple $5 hike to the monthly fee provides three significant advantages;

- Over 12 months it returns more to the club than the $50 fee
- It reduces the initial cost to the new player so making the sport appear more accessible
- After the first year the club need not reduce the monthly fee, so making the member more valuable to the club in terms of fees than they otherwise would have been

Time slots

Squash is generally sold in 30, 40 or 60 minute bookings. As online booking becomes the norm the additional flexibility this provides could and should be exploited. Within club-defined ranges users could be allowed to book in 5 or even 1 minute blocks, as the cost of the transaction to SNZ or the club is the same. This may seem unnecessary but the logic of removing every possible restriction to the customer is clear. Some customers may wish to book for just 25 minutes at lunchtime – some larger groups might prefer 85. In the same way by-the-minute booking can give the squash customer exactly the product they want, at the price they are happy to pay, at no disadvantage or additional cost to the squash provider. By providing additional flexibility in booking busy clubs may even be able to fit in additional customers, raising overall revenue.

Pricing based on perceptions of value, not cost

Clubs must ensure that the fees they charge are not too low. While it is important that they meet their member's needs they must not assume that all members want the lowest possible fees and so supply court time at the lowest possible price. It is important as by undercharging clubs miss a critical opportunity to accrue development funds. Squash has an advantage as it is most commonly a two person game. If we assume that the players split costs then the perceived cost to the buyer is only half the court fee.

A non-commercial operation may naturally default to delivering their service at the lowest possible price. This may be because:

- They wrongly assume price is the key determinant in the customers buying decision
- They don't want to be perceived as greedy/grasping

Clubs should be encouraged to recognize that under-pricing their product deprives them of valuable income that could be used to fund club renovation. The importance of healthy, welcoming facilities to the future of the sport has been long recognized in SNZ strategy. By under-pricing the service they deliver clubs are actually contributing to the decline of the sport, as they are unable to maintain their facilities to a standard high enough to meet the needs of the modern customer. A healthy club should always be in surplus and steadily improving its facilities. This both gives the most positive impression to prospective customers and benefits the existing membership.

School pricing

During research for this paper we found one club charging schools only $500/pa for access to the clubs facilities. With multiple children (classes) visiting multiple times per month this seems significantly under-priced. When pricing for schools clubs must understand which other options are available to the school and their cost, so they can price accordingly.

Clubs can also add value to their school offering by making available loan equipment (making it easy for the customer) and offering their pupils discounted club memberships and casual play. This could even be extended to parents of pupils.

Squash is an attractive sport for schools and if correctly marketed offers a compelling value proposition;

- safe enclosed environment
- all weather
- minimal set-up/break down time
- high impact/fast calorie burning
- simple to understand
- accessible to all pupils regardless of ethnicity, gender etc.

Collaborative pricing

It is clear that local clubs already collaborate and communicate well regarding tournaments. They should also be doing the same regarding pricing & memberships. Where clubs overlap geographically it would make sense if the best clubs with the best facilities charged a little more and the weaker clubs a little less, but with the lowest price still sufficient to support development. Clubs must understand that individuals make buying decisions based on a whole range of criteria (convenience, perceived value etc.) in addition to price. By collaborating clubs can ensure that they all charge enough to develop their clubs to a good standard. As previously noted, undercharging for squash may undermine the long term viability of the sport as a whole.

Flexibility of payment options

As with memberships standard commercial practice would be to offer as many options for payment as necessary to meet the customer's needs. These might include;

- monthly payment option
- credit card payments
- Eftpos
- direct debit
- online payment providers such as PayPal

While it makes sense to ensure that payment method is not a block to new players it is recognized that some clubs lack the funds, infrastructure and the specialist knowledge to offer these systems. If a modern payment mechanism (such as automatic monthly credit card billing for subs) was available it may have the benefit of greatly reducing administration time and paperwork for a club.

Access to equipment

Squash requires little in the way of specialist equipment which is a distinct advantage. Clubs need to anticipate equipment issues for new players and have loan equipment available and accessible. This meets the customers need (makes it easy) and the club has a chance to raise revenue with hire fees.

The issue of non-marking shoes needs also to be considered. Casual players may not immediately have access to court shoes and clubs should anticipate this so it is not a barrier to participation. It seems

broadly impractical for clubs to hold loan footwear so other options should be deliberated. These could include;

- 'one-off' club acceptance of non-court shoes for casual users perhaps in return for a small floor cleaning fee
- keeping a small stock of low cost shoes in the club for sale

Public vs. club

A further misalignment is noted between club and players. A commercially operated squash club would wish to achieve maximum sales and occupancy of courts, whereas a club player (who is also possibly an influential club official) actually does not want their club to be too busy – as it will make it harder for them to get court time when wanted. This fact must be recognized and mitigated by offering members advantageous court booking and cheaper pro-rata fees while still ensuring the club is as attractive as possible to new players. Otago University squash club is a useful example here;

- only one 'public' court out of three
- 'member' courts often empty when public court in use

Load balancing\Price discrimination

Price discrimination describes the sale of identical services at different prices – a common example being airline tickets. It is widely accepted that tickets at peak times cost more than in off-peak times. The same model presents an opportunity for squash operators looking to sell as much court time as possible.

There are two conditions required for discriminatory pricing;

1. There must be a different price elasticity of demand from each group of customers
2. Customers are not able to switch suppliers too easily

Squash meets these two requirements. Clubs are generally spread apart and the market always has users with different attitudes to cost/price.

Clubs should be encouraged to charge less in non-peak periods. If club members want to use the courts mostly in the evenings, make the casual rates highest then and lower during the day. Gym memberships are commonly sold in this way.

"it is totally unfair for a person playing once or twice a week during off-peak times to pay the same subs as a competitive player who plays most nights between 4pm and 7pm." SNZ Crellin Report 1993

Pay for play (PAYP)

SNZ has rightly placed much effort into developing systems to allow clubs to offer casual users easy access to squash with an online pay as you play facility. Given that many clubs are unstaffed during the day providing a technical solution to the issue of secure access and availability should is logical.

SNZ developed technology to allow new players to book online and turn up and play, which should be applauded. If this is managed in conjunction with smart signage at clubs (see figure 2) with links to pay/access websites this removes many of the main barriers to entry.

Figure 2: Pay'n'Play sign retrieved 5/11/12 from images.trademe.co.nz/photoserver/40/236029440_full.jpg

Conclusion

Consideration of the sales model leads to the following:

To be as attractive as possible to the market, potential squash players should have access to as many types of subscription and payment models as necessary. This is already delivered by some well-resourced clubs but not all. Availability of price and play information is fragmented. Some clubs do not have the time, skills or funds to improve their sales model. For this reason it is suggested that SNZ consider extension of the iSquash platform to offer a member billing and payment management system for clubs. This would make available a single, strong, best practice platform for the sale of squash memberships and casual play at a single point at www.squashnz.co.nz.

A modern sport requires a modern, sophisticated sales model. SNZ has a successful past record in delivering effective solutions to clubs via the web in iSquash. By extending the iSquash platform to

include membership sign-up and payment management SNZ can most effectively **remove barriers to participation**, help **grow the sport** and at the same time **improve the relevance and influence of Squash NZ.**

Solution - innovating the sales model

The public face of an iSquash membership & billing module would live within www.squashnz.co.nz. Customers will be able to visit the site, select a [subscribed] club, view its prices and membership options and then sign up and pay or set up monthly/periodic billing. Features should include;

- Easy access to club, contact & pricing information
- Online membership sign up & billing
- Multiple alternatives for membership (social, monthly, student, off peak etc.)
- Multiple payment options (Eftpos, credit card, direct debit etc.)
- Pay-as-you-play options for clubs which have that ability
- Online booking of court time, ditto

The main benefits of this system are;

- Makes it easy for any prospective customer to join any participating NZ squash club or pay-to-play (for clubs so enabled).
- Allows clubs to offer more membership options (to attract more market segments) without more administration.
- Allows clubs to accept many more payment options (direct debit, credit card automatic monthly billing etc.) without additional cost and administration.
- As well as club access to membership billing records, users are able to log in and check their own membership status, pay subs, change payment method etc. This also reduces the club administration overhead.
- For the first time all club pricing will be available at a single point. This will be useful for club administrators when setting fees.
- Greatly simplifies club admin, all handled online as extension of iSquash.
- Income positive. The system provides significant benefits to clubs in terms of reduced time and simplified administration. Therefore SNZ may charge the club a fee ($5-$10) per member per annum as the provider. This could be in addition to the annual affiliation fee if necessary, and

fees could also be charged for junior and other memberships. The platform would provide a source of regular income for SNZ.

- A non-trivial benefit of the system is that payments would flow in through the site from the squash player, through the SNZ system and **out** to clubs, rather than the clubs sending **in** SNZ fees (via the regions). While the net overall value to the club is the same, accepted loss aversion theory from the field of behavioural economics tells us that receiving money is viewed considerably more positively that spending it. This partially mitigates some of the negative aspects of affiliation. To help reduce club administration further iSquash could also automatically handle the payment of club to region fees, if this were strategically useful for SNZ.

- Affiliation fees are automatically deducted by SNZ and the balances forward to club accounts.

- Reinforces www.squashnz.co.nz as the key resource for squash information in NZ.

To help power this solution all clubs need to have an online presence. Again, like the sales model some clubs lack the skills, resources and time to deliver this effectively. In conjunction with the sales model SNZ can resolve this issue simply & easily by providing clubs with free/very low-cost club mini-sites hosted within www.squashnz.co.nz

- Meets SNZ strategy to encourage clubs to be online

- Logical extension of the existing club directory within www.squashnz.co.nz.

- Improves quality of delivery with professionally designed common templates & structure. Each club mini-site will look professional and provide a minimum set of core data (location map, contacts, prices etc.)

- Compatible with mobile/smartphone access

- Compatible with search engine indexing

- Reduces cost & administration for clubs

- Clubs with existing websites may choose to point them at their SNZ site, or, have a mini-site and include a link to their own site for additional information

- Clubs manage their own details with simple online content management

- Club-managed pages removes some administration overhead from SNZ

- Reinforces www.squashnz.co.nz as the key resource for squash players in NZ

A centralized online membership & billing tool would be a win-win for both SNZ and clubs. Clubs get a sophisticated sales platform which is more attractive to customers and at the same time reduces administration. SNZ benefit by improving access to the game in NZ and so encourage player and club growth. Any prospective player in NZ should be able to visit www.squashnz.co.nz to find their local club, check prices and to immediately book a court or sign up for membership. SNZ should encourage this progress from browser to player with a firm call to action on the site ("Sign Up Now" or "Play Today!").

Development of such a system for SNZ is not a trivial task and would take careful specification and considerable time. However, commercial web based club membership & billing systems are already available so the model is proven. Within the limits of this project iSquash seems to have been positively accepted by clubs so adding more features is consistent and cost effective, assuming SNZ is committed to managing and developing iSquash for the long term. Member billing and registration is logically the next step and as described offers significant opportunities for the squash community.

4.2 Campaign Development

As established in the previous sections of this report, squash clubs in New Zealand have experienced a significant decline in interest and participation along with an aging demographic, and the number of registered affiliated players has decreased from 50K+ to approximately 21K. Our research and analyses among Otago University students and other potential target groups demonstrated, however, that these developments are not necessarily a sign of a general lack of interest in the sport of squash. Rather, the approach and expectations of people interested in playing squash these days have changed.

Traditionally, squash has been a club based sport with over 200 club organisations throughout the country. The past two decades have brought about a significant change in peoples' personal as well as professional lives, however, and increasingly hectic schedules as well as flexible and at the same time more demanding work arrangements have also resulted in a different approach to recreational activities. Many people are not necessarily prepared to become affiliated members of a club anymore in order to play their favourite sport. They are looking for more flexible ways to keep fit and active. With a growing trend in pay-for-play formats Squash NZ will, therefore, have to identify new opportunities to enable significant growth in the number of squash players nationwide and to reach and engage existing as well as potential squash players.

Squash NZ has already recognised this trend and reacted by developing an online court booking software which is available to all affiliated squash clubs in New Zealand and is another module of iSquash which has been developed to assist clubs in providing services to their membership. As outlined in the Online Booking Info Sheet (see Appendix 3), stage 1 of the access and security module will allow club members to make and manage court bookings from home and provide clubs with information on court usage. Stage 2 will link the system to an access system with online payment which will allow clubs to provide and manage access to their facilities on a "Pay for Play" basis. A pilot of the software is scheduled to go live at the Squash City Squash Club in Invercargill as well as at the Otago Squash Club by November/December 2012.

It is not enough for Squash NZ to just make this new software available to affiliated clubs, however. In order for this new approach to be successful and have a real impact on the number of squash players nationwide, Squash NZ will have to find ways to efficiently promote their new software, on a club level as well as to the general public, and develop an effective sales and marketing strategy .

Targeting Campaigns

As pointed out under section 3.2, sport consumers or customers in general are motivated by very different factors and benefits and it is essential to identify and define these different motives and motivators in order to establish how to best communicate and address them through a specifically targeted marketing campaign. According to Aaron C. T. Smith in his book 'Introduction to Sports Marketing', "there are numerous valid ways of defining sport consumers, most of which revolve around identifying different kinds of sport products or services. However, the first point to make is that there is a difference between sport consumers and sport stakeholders. A consumer is an individual or group who use a sport or sport-related product or service in exchange for a direct […] or indirect […] payment. A stakeholder is an individual or group who have an interest or agenda in a sport product or service. For example, the government and corporate sponsors are stakeholders in that they have an interest in sport products and services, but they are not consumers." (A. Smith, 2012) The latter can be subdivided into sporting goods consumers, sport services consumers, sport participants and volunteers (i.e. people actively engaged in sport as participants or in unpaid organisational and support roles, including clubs), and sport supporters, spectators or fans.

The motives of these various types of sport consumers are equally complex. It is, therefore, indispensable to identify and understand these underlying motives in order develop a successful and targeted marketing approach. Without this knowledge it will, otherwise, be difficult to tailor a campaign to individual consumer's needs and any marketing efforts will potentially be misdirected. As a result, we must look at their consumer behaviour from a range of perspectives. According to A. Smith, "one common approach in business […] is to consider sport consumption behaviour from an economic viewpoint. This view suggests that people behave rationally and use sport products and services that meet their quality and value needs. The problem with this view, of course, is that sport consumers do not necessarily behave in rational ways because they have an emotional connection to the sport products they consume. For this reason it is productive to consider consumer behaviour from a psychological and social point of view." (A. Smith, 2012)

Strategy for the Targeted Segment

Once the target customers as well as their underlying motivators have been identified, we can look at developing an individual, targeted promotion and marketing strategy. Promotion covers a broad range of activities, all of which are designed to attract attention, increase the awareness of consumers, and

encourage them to purchase or take interest in a specific product or service. Promotion is all about communicating with and educating consumers, and involves all forms of communication destined to inform, persuade and remind consumers about a product or service. The aim of promotion is to encourage consumers to develop a favourable opinion about a sport or product, and to stimulate them to try it. Promotion is, basically, about selling a specific product or service to a consumer. (A. Smith, 2012)

Implications for Squash NZ

What exactly are the implications of these theories and findings for Squash NZ? As established during our conversations and video-meetings with Squash NZ their current focus or target customers for the planned 'Pay for Play' campaign are the clubs as well as existing partners and sponsors. They have included some information on the new iSquash Online Booking & Access system on their Squash NZ Website and created an Online Booking Info Sheet based on the same information (see Appendix 3).

Moreover, they are planning to promote the new tool to exiting partners, clubs and sponsors during a Squash NZ Roadshow planned for February/March 2013. A potential schedule has been attached to this report under Appendix 4.

Squash NZ has developed an online court booking software which is available to all affiliated squash clubs in New Zealand. Affiliated clubs and existing partners are, therefore, the main target group of their promotional activities. We believe, however, that this approach is too limited and should go beyond the target groups (i.e. clubs and sponsors) identified so far.

As established in the previous sections of this report, Squash NZ will have to focus their efforts on the unaffiliated squash player if they want to enable significant growth in the number of squash players nationwide, and the new 'Pay for Play' concept provides the perfect opportunity to address and engage them. In order for the 'Pay for Play' approach to be successful, however, it is essential to create an awareness for the availability of this service among the unaffiliated players, and the best way to achieve this is by addressing them directly via SNZ's current 'Pay for Play' campaign. Squash NZ's current approach and structure provides for the clubs to establish a direct connection with squash players nationwide and also entrusts them with any related marketing efforts. Due to time, resource as well as staff constraints, however, these efforts are currently limited to short announcements on the website of the respective club, if available. An efficient and successful marketing strategy, however, requires a conjoint and nationwide approach, in alignment with Squash NZ's current strategic plan.

Pay-for-Play Campaign Recommendation

We recommend expanding the current 'Pay for Play' campaign to not only address clubs and existing partners, but also communities, schools and universities, as well as unaffiliated squash players and sport enthusiasts in general. There is, of course, a variety of ways to do this, and according to A. Smith, "It is common for sport organisations to use a number of different promotional activities simultaneously, rather than to just focus on one. Because different promotional activities can be combined together, they are collectively known as the promotions mix. In other words, it is advantageous to combine a number of promotional activities together into one promotional plan or strategy. A promotional strategy is a plan that aims to use the four main elements of the promotions mix for the best results. The promotions mix elements are: (1) advertising, (2) personal selling, (3) sales promotions and (4) public relations." (A. Smith, 2012)

The following table provides some examples of the promotion tools available and also outlines some of their key strengths and weaknesses.

4.3 Promotional Tools

Tools	Advantages	Disadvantages	Methods
Advertising	Wide reach	High initial outlay	Press
			Radio
	Dramatic images	Impersonal	Television
			Magazines
	Reaches consumers fast	Very little feedback from consumers	Direct mail
			Ticketing agents
			Scoreboard displays
	High exposure	Delayed feedback	Bus and taxi posters
			Billboards and posters
		Unable to customise message to individual consumers	Brochures
			Ticket stubs
			Internet
			Text messages
		Difficult to tell how many consumers buy the product as a result of viewing or hearing the advertisement	Multimedia messages

Tools	Advantages	Disadvantages	Methods
Sales promotion	Attention-grabbing	Minimum reach	In-store promotions
	Informative		Point of purchase sales
		Medium cost per exposure	Exhibitions
	Fast in reaching consumers	Usually impersonal	Product give-aways (stickers, shirts, admission give-aways)
	Moderate control over the communication	Unable to customise message to individual consumers	Two-for-one offers
			Free admission with purchase
	Relatively easy to track how many consumers buy the product because of the promotion		Prizes tied to tickets
			Frequent purchaser cards (loyalty cards)
			'Selling' of heroes
			Competitions
			Free trials or samples
			Bonus packs
			Trade deals
Personal selling	Direct communication	Narrow reach	Telemarketing
			Door-to-door sales
	Informative	Variable cost per exposure	Endorsements
			Referrals
			Party pans
	Immediate feedback from consumers	Slow to reach target customers	Sponsorship
	High control over promotional message		
	Able to customise message to individual consumers		
Public relations	Wide reach	Variable image	Press releases
			Result lists
	Informative	Very little feedback from consumers	Photographs
			Commentary and reviews
	Low cost per exposure	Delayed feedback	Feature articles

Source: 'Introduction to Sports Marketing' by A. Smith

Leveraging Marketing Channels to Highlight Benefits

We believe that Squash NZ should take advantage of the upcoming Roadshow to expand its reach and create a greater awareness for squash in general - and the new 'Pay for Play' option in particular - by connecting with local institutions and facilities in the proximity of the clubs they are planning to visit. For that purpose it is vital to circulate information and dates of the Roadshow (by means of posters, flyers, advertising, etc.) well in advance, and preferably not only among the clubs targeted, but also among the local community. Contacts can be initiated and established via existing club members and partners, and there should also be an opportunity to exchange information with local schools, universities and other education institutions, keeping in mind the target customer as well as the three main objectives of a promotional campaign: to inform, persuade and remind existing and potential customers and squash players of SNZ's specific product or service offering.

This takes us to another important observation regarding the upcoming 'Pay for Play' campaign. When it comes to a new product or service offering, it is important for potential consumers or customers to be aware of it, understand its benefits, and know how to acquire or access it. Promotions should, therefore, aim at informing consumers of these aspects of a product or service, especially if the product is new, complex or technical. Up to now, Squash NZ has provided some useful technical and functional information about the benefits, features, costs and implementation of the new iSquash Online Booking Module on their website as well as on a separate information sheet.

And while this information is certainly essential for clubs to make their buying decision, it is also missing the bigger picture, i.e. the underlying strategic advantages and long-term goals connected with the installation of the new 'Pay for Play' module. Clubs need to understand that the new 'Pay for Play' module is not only meant to provide them with a convenient online tool destined to make the administration of their court bookings easier, but that is actually essential if the sport of squash in New Zealand is to survive or even grow over the next couple of years. Squash NZ should, therefore, take this opportunity to not only inform about the potential functional benefits of the new 'Pay for Play' module, but also create a greater awareness among the clubs and make them understand that they will need to change their focus to include the unaffiliated player in their service offering if they want to maintain or even increase the number of affiliated club players in the future.

The current 'Pay for play' campaign provides the perfect platform for that purpose. Clubs will need a good reason to buy the product, and what could be a better reason to obtain the new iSquash Online Booking Module than to promote the sport of squash among unaffiliated players and, thus, attract potential new club members?

Summing up, Squash NZ should consider reviewing their 'Pay for Play' promotion and marketing campaign in accordance with the model set up below in order to establish whether it is in alignment with their overall strategy and marketing objectives, their specific target customers (clubs AND unaffiliated players) as well as their specific promotional objective (in this case, stimulating clubs to act and buy – and ultimately promote - the new online booking module, and attracting unaffiliated players to the clubs). Only then will the new 'Pay for Play' campaign bring the results and outcomes envisioned.

Source: 'Introduction to Sports Marketing' by A. Smith

5. Paving the Way for the Unaffiliated Player

5.1 Online Community Forum

What is an Online Discussion Forum?

A place online where the squash community can interact to discuss ideas, offer opinions and get advice about all things related to squash. Community is defined as…
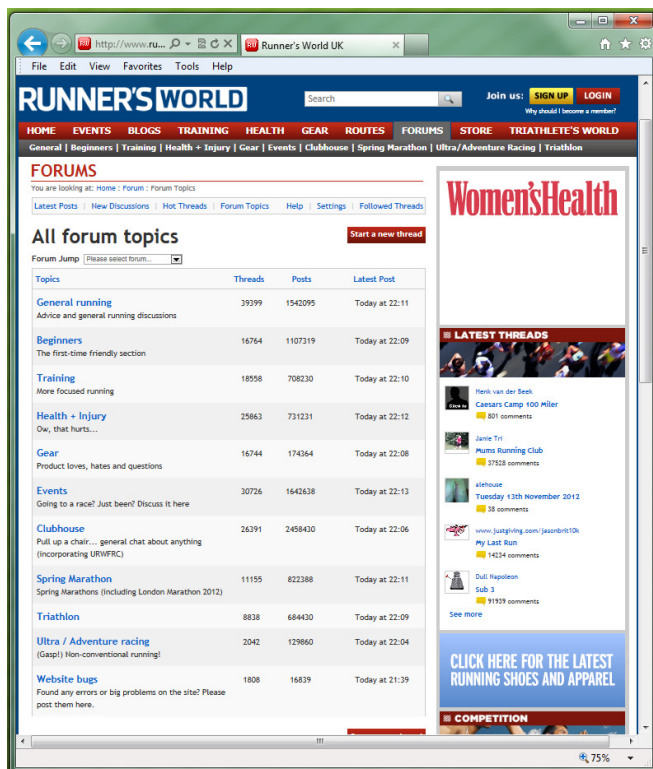

Figure 3: Retrieved from www.runnersworld.co.uk/forum on 14/11/12

- SNZ
- club players & officials
- unaffiliated/casual players
- those interested in starting squash

Also known as message boards, discussion forums are web based sites where members hold conversations in the form of posted messages. A registered user of the forum can post messages or respond to others messages. Each new message (perhaps a question or discussion starter) is known as a "thread". Discussions do not go on dynamically, rather, someone puts up a post and then at some point – minutes, hours, days, or even weeks later – someone else responds to it. Then perhaps someone else responds, the originator comments again too and the discussion grows. Each participant in the discussion is notified (normally by email) whenever something new happens on the thread so they have the option to go back and add further comments. As well as providing an online community, over time discussion forums build up a substantial library of useful information. Photos, brochures, documents etc. can all be attached to posts. With this content the forum acts as a repository for information and grows in value over time.

Discussion forums should not be confused with online chat rooms. Chat rooms operate dynamically and as they generally do not archive discussions are not useful for building a searchable repository of knowledge. In very general terms discussion forums are much more useful for individuals who wish to learn and find/share knowledge. Chat rooms involve a lot of live generic discussion. There is little benefit to be gained from this being archived as a future resource.
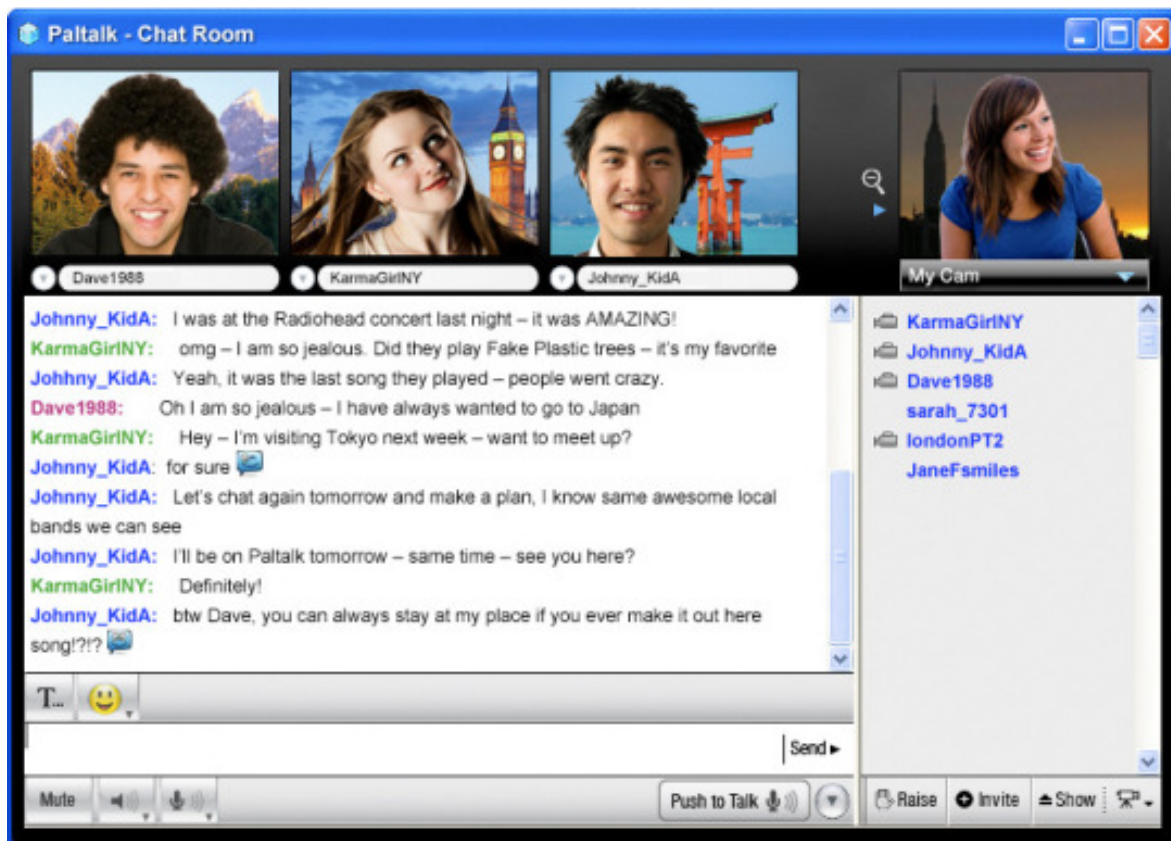
Retrieved from www.enterprisescreenshots.com/screencast/Paltalk_screenshots/ on 14/11/12

History

Previously SNZ had a forum on their old website. There were significant issues:

- It was rarely used

- When used, negative comments about players and SNZ were posted

- SNZ did not have time to moderate it

Any new forum must resolve these issues as discussed below.

- To get the forum off to a good start it must be pre-seeded with an amount of useful posts before public launch. New content does not have to be generated – much already exists on your website and there are many squash resources online (such as tutorial Youtube videos) that can be easily linked to posts. Key users in the squash community will kick off initial discussions and start the ball rolling.

- It will require users to register with a validated online ID (such as Facebook or Google), a growing trend on consumer sites. It gives less content volume but higher content quality, as users are less likely to behave disruptively when their real identity is known to the forum.

- The forum must be self-managing and self-content-generating, as is the case with all well-structured forums. Volunteers will moderate activity on the site day to day. After launch SNZ should be able to simply watch and enjoy participating as the forum grows. These moderators will be in place to provide a balanced response to any provocative members and to terminate accounts of any problem users.

Why do organizations use online forums?

There are several key reasons why organizations drive the creation of online communities/forums:-

- It is an easy and free platform for **sharing** ideas, experiences and resources.
- Users enjoy **belonging** to a community.
- **Mutual support** – users get the chance both to help others and to be helped.
- Gives users self-worth and self-efficacy, as the community is seen to have a **greater influence** than a single voice.

How could one help SNZ?

The NZ squash community is widely spread geographically so a free discussion forum would be an easy way for them to communicate. In addition;

- It would reinforce the SNZ website and Facebook page as the primary web destination for the squash community in NZ

- It would generate more traffic for SNZ website/Facebook and so make them more attractive to advertisers

- It would act as a communications platform for all levels of the sport. At the wide, publically-open end might be forums such as 'General Squash Advice' which any registered user could post

in. At the other narrow end there could also be closed invite-only forums for club officials for club business, or SNZ board members, where SNZ control completely who are involved.

- SNZ will be able to see, and join in if they so wish, all discussions (users have no expectation of privacy with these forums). This gives SNZ an excellent source of up to the minute information and knowledge about exactly what their customers are thinking.

What is the benefit for the squash community?

It may be difficult for a non-user to understand how useful forums are. It seems unlikely, given the no-free-lunch nature of the world that these environments actually survive and thrive solely on the willingness of strangers to help others. The fact is that they do thrive, and forum numbers are growing. There are thousands of forums and millions of posts every day. Some of the advantages of discussion forums are;

- Enthusiasts in any field enjoy sharing their knowledge and passion with others. Forums are a acceptable way to 'show off' and share what you know.
- Access to the community 24/7
- Unthreatening, easy way to learn and ask questions about a subject

To get a feel for forums why not join up to one or two (such as http://www.squash.me.uk/forum) and post some questions. Forums cover a huge range of topics - some successfully used previously by the author;

- Geekzone NZ – for advice on fixing broadband problems
- Ecobob NZ – for green building tips
- HTC One Forum & Nokia Discussions – for mobile phone advice
- SaabCentral & SaabScene – for car restoration help
- Badger & Blade – wet shaving advice
- Lenovo, Asus, Dell and Fuji forums – laptop advice
- Dyson forum – vacuum cleaner repair advice
- Ebay user forums – for post-auction support
- DIYnot – home renovation forum
- Screwfix – tool and DIY forum
- Bongo forum – forum devoted to Mazda camper vans

- HotYoga Doctor – yoga support forum

- BritishExpats.com – immigration advice for moving to NZ

- Runners World UK – distance running

- Comrades Forum – ultra marathon advice

- MYOB forum – small business accounting help

- PocketGPS – GPS for smartphones community site

How does a forum differ from Facebook interaction?

Facebook is a hugely important social platform but it does not function well as a threaded discussion tool. The key to discussion forums is threading –posts are grouped into forums with different topics (Rules, Gear, Health & Injury, Tournament news etc.) to enable the user to quickly navigate to the areas that interest them. If all posts were thrown together in a single group it would very quickly become impossible for users to find the ones that interest them and the forum would die. Threading ensures that information is neatly grouped and ensures users can navigate the forum to get from it what they need. This tree-like structure of a discussion forum simply does not sit well within the confines of a Facebook page. For example the Facebook Wall feature is like a forum with only one topic group – everyone comments about everything in one place, which significantly limits its use. What is possible however is to use a discussion board that integrates with Facebook.
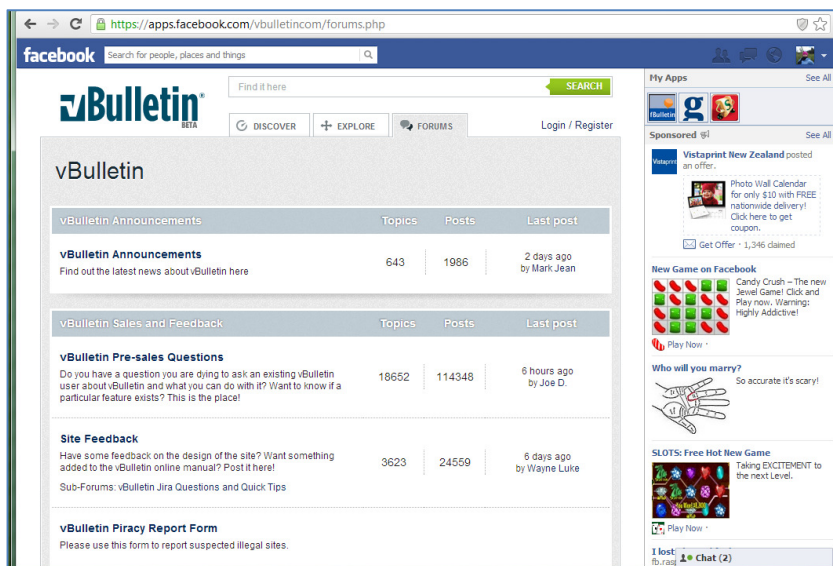
Forum Facebook app, retrieved 15/11/12 from apps.facebook.com/vbulletincom/forums.php

This gives several benefits;

- Users can participate in the SNZ forum without leaving Facebook

- Facebook visitors for SNZ are encouraged to participate in the forum – for example if a prospective player posts a question to SNZ on Facebook they can be directed to the right forum topic for a more complete answer/discussion. This provides a more complete answer for the player and builds content for the forum. Of course, SNZ staff (or volunteer moderators) can themselves answer the forum question if they so wish.

- Questions answered on the forum combine over time to create a valuable searchable resource of squash knowledge and information. The same information, if stored in an unstructured manner within Facebook has limited value.
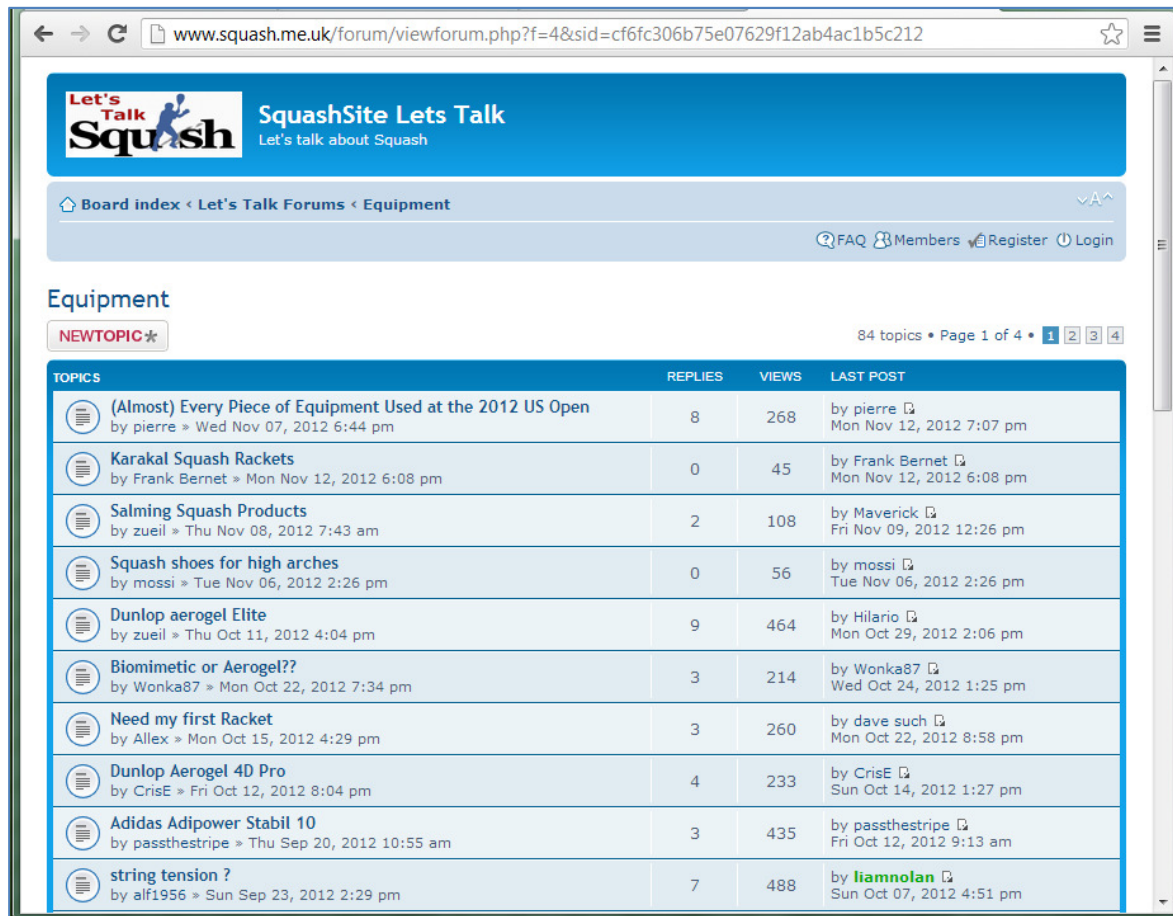
It is recognized that SNZ has limited resources and cannot adopt a forum that needs significant management time. With a self-managing forum integrated with Facebook there should only be a very small requirement for time, limited ideally to just participating like any other forum member. There should be a 'forum feedback' topic where users can report problems with the forum and suggest improvements. Posts here will need to be responded to promptly but with standard forum auto-email alert functions this group can be easily monitored.

User input / output

There are many kinds of sports related forums;

- Tennis (tt.tennis-warehouse.com, 70k members)

- Baseball (http://baseball-fever.com/, 19k members)

- Mountain biking (forums.mtbr.com, 400k members)

- Horse riding (www.ultimatedressage.com/forums, 13k members).

There are some lightly trafficked squash forums.

UK squash forum retrieved 15/11/12 from www.squash.me.uk/forum/

- http://www.squash.me.uk/forum/
- http://www.squashgame.info/articles.php
- http://forums.us-squash.org/
- http://www.sports-india.com/viewforum.php?f=35&sid=2b42babab5bef74d2ea937b5d4f38231

This can be seen as a real opportunity for SNZ, as no definitive English-language squash forum already exists (users would be reluctant to move from a busy board to a new one). The investment to create a forum is low and the returns could be asymmetrically high if it becomes successful. As detailed below forums are completely subject to the network effect – the more they are used the more useful they become, so the more they are used. If successful the forum could deliver multiple wins for low cost;

- inspire more people to play squash

- improved communications for the NZ squash community at all levels
- cement www.squashnz.co.nz as the key web destination for squash in NZ
- free content for SNZ website

If the forum provides useful information and has friendly and competent moderators then over time it will attract users from around the world. These should be welcomed, as more visitors = more activity = more posts.

It is important to understand that the forum will not need a huge number of participants to become successful. Effective on-line communities can be created even with fairly low traffic. This is possible as users who are interested in a topic visit the same threads over and over again. Single posts are seen by multiple users, increasing traffic.

Attractive to the non-affiliated and affiliated player alike

Provided that the forum is well structured and moderated it will be of interest to the whole squash community. This is achieved by giving the different sections of the community different areas in which to communicate. Both club officials and brand new learners can communicate and get value from one forum but each in different areas.

Platforms

A discussion forum is software run on a web server, similar to the product that runs and displays the SNZ web site. Administrators, moderators and users access it through their normal browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome etc.). There are several alternative ways for SNZ to buy or rent the forum software depending on budget and requirements;

- Get a standalone product such as **vBulletin**, **phpBB** or **XenForo** and have it installed and configured on your web space by your web host.
- Rent it as a service from a specialist, such as **IP.Board**. In this case the supplier creates the forum on their own web space – you or your web host just need to configure it.

Regardless of the software you use (the above are the most common) it is important that you choose a product that meets your requirements both now and in the future. Just like a library adding books a discussion forum grows in value over time. At launch the new SNZ forum will be like a new empty library building with just a few books on the shelves. Over time users will gradually add more and more

content and the forum will become more popular, and so grow faster. At that time you absolutely don't want to be having to migrate to new discussion board software just because your first one is now not up to the task. All the valuable information in posts will have to be moved and the community disrupted while you change platforms. As discussion software is low cost it makes no sense to not buy the right tool at the start. Your web host will be able to help you make the correct decision, and is likely to already have a preferred forum solution.

Suggested must-have features

- Must integrate with Facebook/have Facebook app
- Allows users to register with Facebook or other social login
- Must be accessible for mobile users on smartphones with any special app
- Ideally allows users to give other users kudos or thank you points
- Allows squash ranking to be shown on user details
- Easy to administer

Updates & Security

Given the low cost of forum software it makes sense for SNZ to purchase a commercial solution which includes updates and to ensure that the web host is contracted to install these as they become available. This minimizes both management time required and the potential for downtime. A forum must be available 24/7 for its community.

Terminology

Users of discussion forums use some terminology that may not be familiar to non-users. The most common terms are;
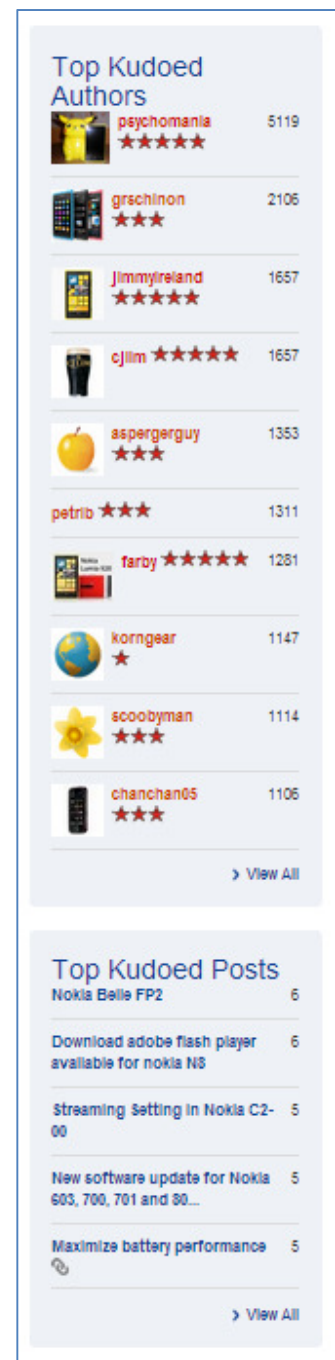

Figure 4. Forum kudos ranks

- Thread – a question or 'topic' of discussion to which forum users post contributions and replies. Over time the thread may generate other topics or come to an end.

- Post - a single contribution made by an individual to a topic in a forum.

- Off topic – a thread started in the wrong forum (asking about racquets in an Injury forum for example) or a reply to a thread that is unrelated to the thread subject. Moderators can easily move these posts to the right place.

- Moderators – normally volunteers who receive auto-emails from the forum software when there is activity so they can ensure that they quality of the forum content is maintained. For example, they would delete a user account if its posts broke forum rules, for example by *trolling*.

- Trolling/Trolls – users who purposely post provocative messages simply to disrupt threads. Trolling is typically banned by forum rules so moderators can easily remove their accounts. On specialist boards, such as SNZ, trolling is rare.

- Spam – advertising messages posing as posts, often automatically created with software. Good quality forum software will use various methods when users join to ensure they are real humans, and not automated. Again, spamming the forum will be in breach of the rules so moderators can quickly remove offending accounts.

- Kudos or Badges – forum users like to compete with each other, just as on a squash court. On forums this is done by counting posts, or allowing users to give thanks to others for useful posts by awarding points. These accrue over time and are displayed publically to allow frequent forum users to show off their talents, perhaps just like the SNZ grading system. See figure 4.

- Newbie – someone new to forums and unfamiliar with their etiquette.

Community Values

Like any other community group forums can be welcoming and friendly or closed, clique -y and unapproachable. Just like walking into a squash club for the first time, when first using a forum the poster might be a little nervous and unsure of the right etiquette. The setting of a public web forum is fortunately much more accessible, allowing prospective squash players to browse around and read posts from the comfort of their home without ever posting themselves.

Also, just like in a squash club, it is important to make sure that new people are made welcome and their questions answered politely, even though they may be a complete beginner. A beginner may be nervous about posting what might be perceived as a foolish question. The forum moderators must

ensure that new posts are responded to politely, and redirected if necessary. Users who repeatedly 'flame' others (e.g. "what a stupid question!") must be discouraged by moderators.

New Zealand has an advantage here as kiwis are generally open, polite and welcoming to strangers. If the kiwi attitude is brought to the SNZ forum it will be ideal. Sensible, mature and level headed moderators are key to achieving this goal.

Forum flexibility and sample structure

The following is a suggested structure for the forum on launch. A balance needs to be struck between having too many topic groups (which will look barren in the early days) and not enough that users get frustrated and don't know where to post. If the 'General' folder grows too rapidly this would indicate that more groups are needed. Users should be encouraged to feedback and tell SNZ what they need.

1. Squash Talk - general squash questions & discussion
2. Beginners – safe to ask anything
3. Gear – anything squash clothing/equipment related
4. Tournament News – clubs and SNZ can promote tournaments here
5. Club & Region Committee chat – only approved club officials can read/post here
6. Forum feedback – any comments/change requests/complaints from users

An advantage with discussion boards is that extra topics can be added quickly at very little cost (just time to modify the settings). These new topics could include;

7. Ask A Coach (only registered coaches can respond here)
8. Health & Injury – as described
9. South Island Squash
10. North Island Squash
11. SNZ Board Business – non-public, invite only
12. SNZ Club Support – information and resources for clubs, non-public
13. SNZ-Regional Chat – platform to distribute information to regions, again non-public

Over time it is likely that users will ask for additional topic areas to be added. It is important for the forum that new topics are not added too fast, and that they do not become so specific that there are only a few posts in each. SNZ must ensure that any new topics added are relevant and do not distract

from the overall goal of the forum which is community building by adding new players. For example it may not make sense to create a topic group for a single squash club. Those club users may love to participate in a forum but their comments will never been seen by the wider community, as only locals might be curious enough to look inside that topic. SNZ needs the users from that club out and communicating with the wider squash community.

Costs

Forum software is low cost. Examples;

- vBulletin USD$249
- phpBB is free (open source)
- IP.Board hosted 'Plus' service is USD$45/month for 40 concurrent users (smaller and larger plans available)

It is likely that the cost of the platform will make up a minor part of the overall cost of introducing a professional discussion forum for the NZ squash community. The bulk of the cost will be;

- Web deployment/configuration
- Determining the forum rules and guidelines (templates available)
- Management time finding and starting the moderators

Note that with hosted forums it is possible to get free demonstration forums for a few days review. SNZ could use this time to see how a forum might look and operate in practice.

Rules / Terms & Conditions / Child User Policy

Forum users will be asked to accept non-negotiable terms and conditions when they join the forum. These rules are also known as 'Forum Use Guidelines'. They are the rules each user must abide by when posting, and they define how the moderators can work. Un-moderated forums do exist with anything-goes policies but these would not be a suitable model for SNZ. Forum software will include template rules and these can be amended by SNZ if necessary. Some examples of NZ forum rules;

- http://www.geekzone.co.nz/content.asp?contentid=1046
- http://www.clubsub.org.nz/forum/index.php?action=register
- http://www.fishnhunt.co.nz/forum/YaBB.cgi?action=register

Rules need not be over-complex as the examples indicate.

You may decide that you prefer to set a minimum user age for the forum. This is easily controlled using a birthday date field on the forum registration page. Although users may lie about their age this mechanism places the responsibility on the user rather than the forum owner. Given the nature of the forum it seems unlikely inappropriate content would be an issue. Again, sensible mature moderation is key to policing the community.

Forum seeding/Initial content

Discussion forums live or die completely by 'network effects' – that is, the more they are used the more valuable they become. A discussion forum needs to have users to self-generate content but also needs content to attract users in the first place. Fortunately discussion forum technology is well established and there are thousands of successful discussion forums worldwide with millions of users. SNZ can leverage this body of established knowledge to ensure its forum launch is effective and successful.

Key Guidelines for a Successful Forum

1. It needs champions to succeed. Find one tech-savvy squash player to start your moderator volunteer team and have them to find the rest as needed. You will require 2-3 to start. Ensure the moderation is distributed and does not rely too heavily on one person. This risks having that persons personality too strongly influence the forum culture. Each 'mod' will look after certain topics. A report abuse tool on the forum alerts moderators any time they need to investigate a post.

2. Don't launch the forum empty. It *must* be initially seeded with content.

3. Have the moderator & key user volunteers lined up and ready to start.

4. Keep an open mind to suggestions. It is just as bad to have an over-moderated, over-controlled forum as it is to have one that is under-moderated.

5. Make the forum rules clear and fair. Forum rule templates are freely available.

6. KISS – start with a just a few forum topic groups and expand only as needed.

7. Contests are a proven way to get forums up and running. Offer some prizes for best post, best forum user, most active user etc. They don't have to be expensive.

8. Don't underestimate how much people like to show how clever they are! Choose forum software that allows users to thank each other for their answers ('giving kudos'). Forum users will compete to have the highest kudos rankings. See figure 4.

9. Censor wisely. Moderators can delete posts, issue private warnings, issue temporary bans and finally kick users off the forum as a last resort. But better to avoid these problems completely with clear user rules and sensible moderation.

Importance of key users/forum champions/ the 'mods'

A discussion forum is undoubtedly a powerful tool to build a community from geographically widely-spread like-minded individuals. Nevertheless, like any form of discussion it is important that it says on topic, and that the participants follow basic rules of good behaviour. To make sure this happens most forums have volunteer moderators ('mods'). Moderators are the key to the success or failure of a forum.

A moderator acts like a chairman and sits in the background watching on forum activity. Normally this watching is automated (by emails, 'report abuse' buttons and the like) so that the moderator does not have to actually watch the board continuously. The moderator is likely of course to be a participant in the forum, being interested in the topic, and this does not conflict with their responsibilities. Moderators perform the following tasks;

- Most importantly, they act as ambassadors for the forum and welcome new users. They should also act where necessary to promote discussions.
- They make sure that contributors abide by the rules of the forum.
- They lock or delete threads that are inappropriate and warn, restrict or ban users who repeatedly break the rules.
- Approve registered users so they can be granted rights to read and post in the non-public discussion groups like 'Club & Region Committee'.

Being a volunteer moderator is not an easy job, but it is enjoyable to someone within the field being discussed. It requires tact, patience and maturity. Mods get no tangible rewards for their efforts but there is a great deal of satisfaction to be had in helping start, grow and steer an online community of people with a related interest.

For the SNZ forum the moderators will not need to 'approve' every post before it appears – that would be too onerous and unnecessary. Instead, they will simply need to participate and be ready to respond to any email alerts of problems if they appear. Initially 2 moderators sharing the role should suffice. As the forum grows 1-2 more moderators may be needed, each covering just a small period each week.

Recruitment of moderators with the tact and skill needed can be a difficult task. However, SNZ already has access to a large number of volunteers enthusiastic about squash. These will also have many tech-savvy offspring who already are familiar with forums. Remember that to be a moderator is a respected position within a community.

In addition to moderators the forum must be pre-seeded by a number of 'key' users. This should be as many as possible but not less than 20. The idea is that these users start participating on the forum for some weeks before it is made public, to build content. When the public starts to visit the site it is crucial that it already contain some useful information and interesting posts, otherwise they will leave and may never return.

Using iSquash to seed & launch the forum

SNZ has the great advantage of access to the email addresses of the core NZ squash community via iSquash. Provided this does not break its use of email guidelines, and the forum is first **tested, up and running** it would be a perfect way to attract users via promotional emails and build the community. Invite a few hundred registered users at a time by email to participate, perhaps in conjunction with some competitions and prize giving. Eventually inviting the whole database, staggered over a few weeks would get the forum off to a great start.

Figure 5: Forum user example

Remember that forum kudos is desirable. SNZ could encourage new users by offering free forum status upgrades to users that start in the first week. So, for example, rather than start with the standard 'Newbie' or 'Junior' rank they could receive a higher grade (Squash Ambassador, Senior Member etc.) right away. The cost of this to SNZ is nil. Consideration could also be given to allowing forum members to show off their SNZ grading within their forum ID. Again, this would cost SNZ nothing but allow users to display their 'ranking' within the community. See figure 5. Imagine if the medals in this example could show their SNZ squash rank – a great feature.

Improving content & community standards with real identities

It is an accepted growing trend that the web is becoming less anonymous. While some forums still allow anonymous or unauthenticated registration this is becoming more uncommon. By forcing users to register for the SNZ forum using their Facebook, Google or iSquash login (for example) you will reduce

the potential for problems. Having their real identity known to the forum owner greatly reduces the chance that the user will cause problems for the forum. It is recognized that forum content volume is reduced but quality is higher with this kind of registration.

Consideration should also be given to using the existing iSquash IDs for the new forum. This would avoid users having to create an additional online ID & password.

Action Plan

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Agree platform with web host and review examples	Establish moderator guidelines	'Soft' launch, not public yet	Start promotion
Define forum rules	Mods found	Key users participate	Invite iSquash members, a few hundred at a time
Define initial topic structure	Web host creates forum online	Posts start to build	More posts build
Agree forum mgmt. with host (backups etc.)	Seek key users	Mods practice	Momentum gathers
Seek moderators			

Conclusion

Building an online community for squash in New Zealand will take time and effort. Like other platforms, such as Facebook, it must (initially) be worked on daily to encourage user interaction. Unlike Facebook however once a forum is up and running it becomes self-generating and self-managing (with volunteer moderators). The low cost of setting up and running a forum makes it a natural choice for SNZ with its limited resources. If carefully planned and implemented the forum should be successful in raising the profile of squash in NZ and attracting new players. Given the low start-up fees and the reasonably low commitment in time SNZ could receive back in value many more times the cost to create the community.

Further Reading

Internet forum description - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_forum

Discussion board on how to run a discussion board - http://www.communityadmins.com/

Advanced discussion board advice - http://www.managingcommunities.com/archives/

Example popular UK running forum - http://www.runnersworld.co.uk/forum

Forum software review site - http://www.forum-software.org

5.2 Tournaments & Event Marketing

One of the key aspects of growing the number of people playing squash is the ability to build a community around the sport. Historically this has driven the success of local clubs throughout New Zealand. Widely considered one of the great benefits of the sport is the community atmosphere created with the club affiliation. There are a number of modern trends that have redefined the customer's definitions of community as well as the needs and expectations associated with community. Our observations and regional research include the following insights of squash in New Zealand.
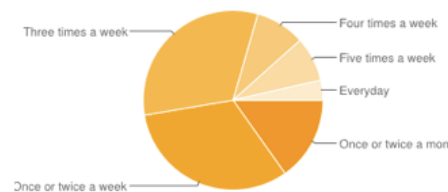
Initial Observation	Initial Recommendations
- Fragmented Regions	- Streamlined Communication Channels
- Decentralized Leadership	- Central Communication Hub and New Source
- Poor Communication Channels	- Shared Best Practices
- Lack of Access, Barriers to Entry	- Improved Access, Limited Barrier

In a brief survey of approximately 50 random squash players to have passed through the University of Otago squash court facilities, the need for more leadership and community was revealed. Well over half of the individuals surveyed were currently playing between 1-3 matches per week. The vast majority of these individuals claimed to have introduced others to the sport through networks of interested friends and family. This is a critical finding as it supports the assumption that most individuals are introduced to a new sport through a keen friend who is actively playing.

How many times a week do you usually play squash?

Three times a week — Four times a week — Five times a week — Everyday — Once or twice a mon — Once or twice a week

Have you introduced any new players to the game of squash?

No — Yes

Do you have interest in watching or attending national competitions?

No — Yes

Source: University of Otago, passive squash player surveying.

Moreover, this survey revealed that the vast majority of these players were very interested in watching or attending a national competition of the sport. This would suggest that better, or perhaps more expansive communication around events and national tournaments could generate a greater interest in attendance, sponsorship and the sport as a whole.

Tournaments should be largely considered an extension of an Event Marketing strategy. Not only are these opportunities to promote the game's best players in the country, they are great opportunities to bring together players from all over the country, at all skill levels, to celebrate the game. Building community around such events creates annual viral marketing support generated at the grassroots level. Moreover, increased appeal and involvement makes such events far more appealing to potential sponsors that can help elevate the prestige and scope of such an event. Sponsorship not only help cut down on costs, it also allows for significant financial support that could result in profitability if managed correctly.

Viewing Tournaments and Community Building Marketing Events

Event marketing is a term used to represent experiential marketing that focuses on consumer experiences, and treats emotionally and rationally driven consumption as a holistic experience (Schmitt, 1999). Experiences often involve "sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and relational values that replace functional values" (Schmitt, 1999). Events allow for an avenue of communication to customers and prospective audiences and are designed to add value to the experience; events provide an opportunity to engage the consumer with an organization, its people and the community. Events create a social setting for attendees and help raise attendees' involvement level; therefore, attendees are apt to be more receptive to marketing messages and images associated with the event than they are to those presented via other methods (Pope and Voges, 2000).

Event marketing is used for a wide range of reasons including, brand awareness, sales, and image enhancement. "The *types* of goals that firms hope to accomplish do not account for event marketing's appeal; instead, its popularity is based upon the distinctive *way* it helps firms accomplish their communications goals via consumer interaction" (Pope and Voges, 2000).

With tight budgets and increasingly difficult economic times, it is very important to measure return on investment (ROI) from all event-marketing activities. Hence, a survey of over 200 decision- making

marketing executives in U.S. corporations with recorded sales exceeding S250 million was conducted by Meeting Professionals International (MPI). The sample covered automotive, healthcare, high-tech, and financial sectors. The main finding of the MPI foundation shows that event marketing is by far the most effective tool for communication and marketing strategy. The study finds that in terms of ROI, face-to-face event marketing outperforms public relations, Internet advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, and print and broadcast advertising (MPI Foundation, 2004).

Some quality examples of how community is built through larger scale, strategically designed tournaments are abundant. Take for example the Australian Open National Squash tournament. In partnership with the National Convention Centre in Canberra, the event has been held in a high profile city venue three years in a row.

"*Erected on the flat floor of the NCC's Royal Theatre, the purpose-built all-glass squash court "has to be seen to be believed – it is completely transparent from the outside for perfect spectator vision and opaque from the inside so the players aren't distracted by the audience or TV cameras," NCC manager Cindy Young said. In addition to a six-day squash competition between elite players, the Australian Open event featured a wide range of social activities for visitors, including cocktail functions, a gala dinner and a series of mini amateur tournaments in squash centres around Canberra."* http://www.nccc.com.au/organise/case-studies/australian-open-squash-championships/

This is an excellent example of how the National Squash Championship has been utilized as a sports event marketing tool, with a strategic purpose of building strong community. This National Tournament also hosted technical seminars on elite play, new equipment, coaching and squash facilities, while the Exhibition Hall was transformed into a village of sporting goods, equipment and clothing companies showcasing new products for rackets sports, such as tennis, squash, table tennis and badminton. The opportunities for product sponsorship are seemingly endless.

Another example illustrating the strategic contributions of community building around squash tournaments and events include the US Open Squash Championship that has recently been held at Drexel University. Hosting of the event at the University allows US Squash to attract and appeal an entirely new demographic of "customer." Moreover the U.S. Open hosted at Drexel University's has allowed the use of large spaces and more modern facilities. This event was used as an opportunity to

showcase an all-glass professional squash court, audio-visual displays, live multimedia capabilities, a pro shop, tiered stands and VIP viewing galleries, and an interactive expo area for the championship. All including massive sponsorship deals as there was significant community events and exposure to all those present.

New Zealand Squash Open Tournament

Recognizing that there have indeed been NZ Squash Open's in the past, the problem has been inconsistency. The event was hosted in 2009 for the first time in nearly 14 years. Obviously the excitement and energy built around a tournament offering is based on its annual consistency and ability to attract top talent year after year. In addition, this consistency builds the event into an attractive longer-term sponsorship investment. This is a key strategy for this recommendation.

Strategically Aligned Tournaments

By viewing tournaments as business opportunities, it is easy to understand how this style of event marketing can significantly increase awareness and interest in the sport. Perhaps most importantly, you have a strategically aligned and well thought through plan for the event allowing potential sponsors to better understand the value add of partnering with your organization. Strategically aligned tournaments can serve in many different forms. Perhaps the easiest example would be working off of the 2012 campaign for promoting women in squash. As Squash NZ plans out the tournament schedule for the year, an obvious opportunity to align the organizations strategic goals arises in the development of a National Tournament for Women.

Looking at tournaments as an extension of your product offering as well as a tool within the marketing mix allows a key offering from Squash NZ to have a very significant impact on the overall objectives of the organization.

5.3 Leveraging High Performance

High Performance Sport NZ is an incredibly important relationship to continue to nurture. Not only do these investment dollars help develop and support the highest skilled and most advance players in the country, in turn the bolster the image of the sport and success of the Squash NZ's reach. Consider the impact of Susan Devoy's dominance in the sport in the late 80s and early 90s. These performances elevate the profile of the entire sport in the country, and these athletes are keen representatives for the sport AND the country.

"High Performance Sport New Zealand (HPSNZ) was established in 2011–to create an athlete-focused, coach-led and performance-driven system, which provides athletes with world-class support services and facilities, so they can focus solely on performance. They work collaboratively with partners; harness world- leading best practice and, as a one-stop-shop, are able to respond quickly and decisively to meet the needs of our athletes. This gives us a competitive advantage over other nations." Alex Baumann, High Performance Director

Late September 2012, High Performance NZ released its 2013-2020 Strategy describing its vision, and setting new targets for the next two Olympic cycles. "This document also outlines the long-term aspiration for New Zealand to be recognized as having one of the world's leading high performance systems," Baumann says.

The strategy sets out investment and support priorities as:
- Sports and athletes that have medal potential at the Olympic Games (Summer and Winter)
- Non-Olympic targeted sports that can win at world championships
- Sports and athletes that have gold medal potential at the Paralympic Games (Summer and Winter)

It is important for Squash NZ to understand the overall goals and objectives of High Performance in order to best leverage the relationship long term. Squash NZ should focus on support High Performance objectives, as opposed to looking to HP for support. "Ask not what HP can do for you…"

In evaluating overall objectives for Squash NZ in the coming years, it will be imperative to outline specifically how Squash NZ goals and desired outcomes are aligned with that of the High Performance group. By focusing on developing key players for World Championships, as well as continually supporting the effort and awareness around the 2020 Olympic bid.

Key Goals of High Performance Sport New Zealand for the foreseeable future

Squash NZ Ambassadors

In addition to aligning objectives for high-end player development, it will be important to position those highly skilled players as ambassadors for the sport throughout the country. Having key, iconic sport heroes is a critical component to building the image and acceptance of the sport throughout the country. How can Squash NZ best utilize these elite athletes for building the sport?

Including these elite athletes in the Marketing Plan is critical. As Squash NZ develops new product offerings, including a consistent national tournament schedule, the most elite athletes in the country must be not only included, but brought on board to help promote and communicate through the various marketing channels.

Elite squash athletes must be…

- Present and included on online discussion forums
- Active participants in tournament promotion
- Included in Road Shows promoting the sport across the country
- Critical in supporting the sport at the school level
- Involved in the development of other players
- Defined as the image of squash in New Zealand

Joelle King is the obvious choice at this stage, with her recent ranking of 5th overall in the world of squash. New Zealand's number one player has the potential of really taking the sport to the next level in the eyes of kiwis. With success at the high level, including possible World Championship performance, the sport stands to greatly benefit from her success. Squash NZ must leverage Ms King's success and have her leadership and vision be a contributing factor to the marketing success of the organization. Moreover, Ms King is critical in continued relations and investments from High Performance as she could be directly contributing to the success outcomes of that entity.

6. Conclusion

In order to expand the influence and relevance of Squash NZ as a highly effective governing body of the sport we have outlined some very specific and detailed areas of focus for developing a strategic pathway forward. Squash NZ has the opportunity to make significant impact on high-level governance decisions for the growth and development of the sport. Moreover, Squash NZ can align key communication channels and current marketing and event planning initiatives to deliver on strategic priorities. Throughout the assessment of this organization it was clear that Squash NZ is currently performing well in many areas. However, they could stand to significantly increase their impact and influence by aligning various initiatives toward key outcomes.

6.1 Key Recommendations

Marketing Strategy

- Consider broader audience to attract new 'unaffiliated' players to the sport.
- Define customer as anyone interested in playing squash, not just current club members.
- Establish strategic alignment across all marketing channels to attract target audience.

Connecting to the Unaffiliated Player

- Provide a consistent and high-quality sales model to improve customer access to the product.
- Utilize specific campaign tactics, i.e. Road Show, for directly delivering on strategic marketing priorities.
- Tailor campaigns to highlight BENEFITS as opposed to functionality and features.
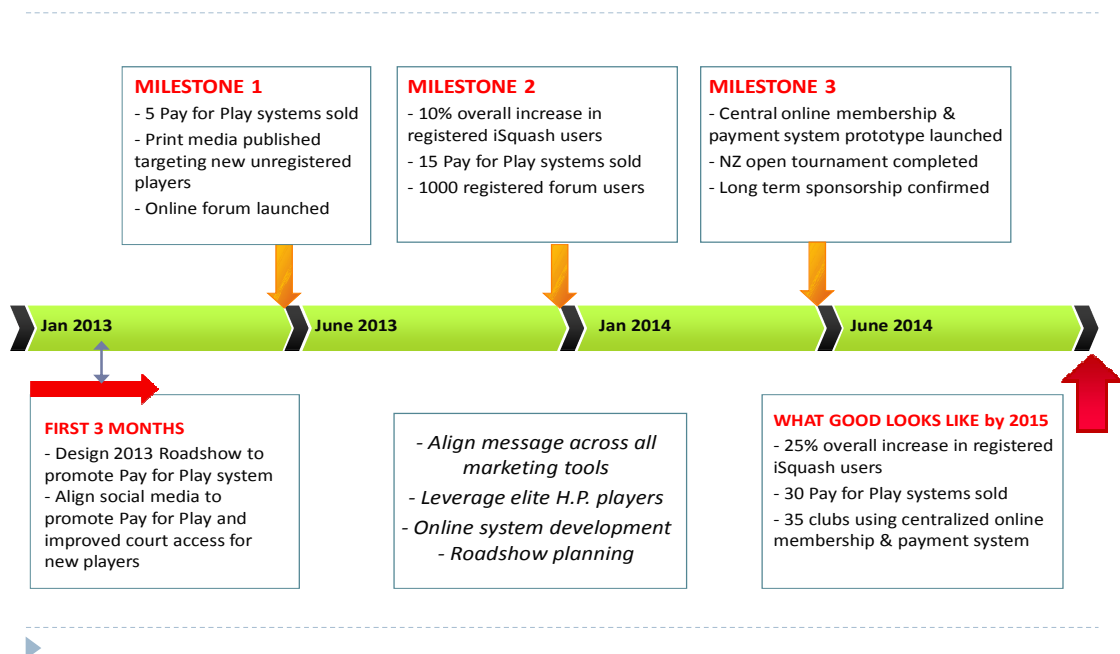
Paving the Way by Building Community

- Online community opportunities are broad reaching and cost effective.
- View annual tournaments as event marketing with long standing sponsorship opportunities.
- Strategically align objectives with High Performance and leverage elite players in messaging.

By changing focus and aligning the communications, marketing and event planning functions within the organization, Squash NZ will be able to effectively target new 'unaffiliated' players to the sport and grow the interest and image of the sport throughout the country. Remaining focused on areas that Squash NZ can directly control, such as high-level communications and event/tournament planning will allow Squash NZ to directly measure impact and return on investment. Targeting new 'unaffiliated' player will allow for growth and expansion of the sport both nationally and regionally.

6.2 Implementation - Timeline & Milestones

There are a number of tangible milestones that we have identified for effective implementation of our recommendations. It will be important to identify quantifiable metrics for success as well as timelines for delivery around each objective. There are a large number of qualitative improvements and processes that are associated with the advancement as well, however these are more difficult to measure. We have identified a suggested lay out for implementation, as well as specific outcomes and deliverables for a two year timeline broken out into 6 month increments.

MILESTONE 1
- 5 Pay for Play systems sold
- Print media published targeting new unregistered players
- Online forum launched

MILESTONE 2
- 10% overall increase in registered iSquash users
- 15 Pay for Play systems sold
- 1000 registered forum users

MILESTONE 3
- Central online membership & payment system prototype launched
- NZ open tournament completed
- Long term sponsorship confirmed

Jan 2013 | June 2013 | Jan 2014 | June 2014

FIRST 3 MONTHS
- Design 2013 Roadshow to promote Pay for Play system
- Align social media to promote Pay for Play and improved court access for new players

- *Align message across all marketing tools*
- *Leverage elite H.P. players*
- *Online system development*
- *Roadshow planning*

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE by 2015
- 25% overall increase in registered iSquash users
- 30 Pay for Play systems sold
- 35 clubs using centralized online membership & payment system

6.3 Accountability

To ensure successful focus and on-time delivery of each recommendation implemented, it is critical to assign a project owner, as well as identify those that will play a support role. In the RASC (Responsible, Approver, Support, Consulted) matrix below we have illustrated the allocation of accountability for the recommended action plan. Identifying these roles in advance of project work is essential for effective communication and ownership of the various project components.

	Responsible	Approver	Support	Consulted
Central Online Membership & Billing System	Jim O'Grady	Board	Outside I.T. Consultancy	Clubs and Customers
Pay for Play System Promotion & Sales	Jim O'Grady	--	Pennie Ball Gary Denvir	Pilot Clubs
Tournaments	Michael Pittams	Jim O'Grady	High Performance Coaches	Regional Club Leadership
Road Show, Social Media, Mktg Materials	Pennie Ball	Jim O'Grady	Gary Denvir	Clubs and Customers

7. Otago MBA Future Involvement with Squash NZ

During this work for this assignment several further projects of value to SNZ were identified but could not be progressed due to time constraints. These could form the basis of future Otago MBA class 'live project' or '540' subjects. The following are summaries of those ideas;

Measuring Squash Popularity in NZ

Currently SNZ measure growth/decline of the sport as only the number of senior full club memberships from affiliated clubs. Critically this fails to measure;

- Casual /unaffiliated players (e.g. at council facilities)
- Pay-to-play players
- Unaffiliated club players

These players contribute nothing to SNZ and SNZ do not communicate to them. Given changing lifestyles it is possible that the future of the sport will focus more on the casual player. Determine how SNZ can more accurately measure total participation in squash in NZ.

Rebranding Squash NZ

Consider the elements required to rebrand Squash NZ;

- More contemporary and modern brand to attract both players and sponsors
- In line with New Zealand sport branding (black, silver fern)

iSquash Tweets

Pushing the dynamic result data contained within iSquash out to players, rather than waiting for them to come and get it, would be a powerful communication win at relatively low cost. No custom app is required, and the information should be accessible using generic tools (Twitter). Outline;

- iSquash users optionally add their Twitter account details to iSquash
- iSquash tweets out ranking changes to iSquash members, including information on those other players on their watch lists
- Users see how their ranking changes, and that of other players they are interested in quickly and easily

Self-scoring on iSquash

Currently players have to wait for a club official, or regional official, to update iSquash with results. What makes iSquash valuable is the dynamic nature of the national squash rankings. A player could change positions several times a day during a key tournament, depending on the movement of the players around them. This is exciting and valuable and needs to be further exploited by SNZ.

It is noted that in some cases results are compiled by clubs and then faxed to other locations for data entry. This is inefficient and wastes administrator time. Structure a model where players can submit their own scores dynamically to iSquash (by web/smartphone) within an effective structure that ensures accuracy and avoids the possibility of any dishonesty. For example, player-submitted scores may only be considered as pending until further validated by an official.

Multi-sport clubs

Consider how clubs can attract additional members by adapting squash court space to include other sports;

- Racketball
- Basketball (single hoop)
- Four square/blockball/boxball

Open for Business

Due to the amateur and volunteer basis of management many squash clubs may not be run on an effective commercial basis. Define how squash clubs can be more customer/public oriented and cater to the needs of the current market. Cover the following areas;

- 'Open to the Public' – effective use of signage to welcome new players and to obtain door codes etc. for Pay-and-Play
- Open doors – solutions to get away from locked, inaccessible clubs
- Potential for using retirees to act as daytime club receptionists

8. References

LiPope, N., & Voges, K. E. (2000). *The Impact of Sport Sponsorship Activities, Corporate Image, and Prior Use on Consumer Purchase Intention*. Sport Marketing Quarterly, 9(2), 96-102.

MPI Foundation. (2004). *As Events Unfold: Event Trends 2004.* The George P. Johnson Company Report on the Changing Rule of Events in Corporate America's Marketing Mix.

Schmitt Bernd, H. (1999). *Experiential Marketing. How to Get Customers to Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate to Your Company and Brands.* The Free Press, New York.

Smith, A. (2012). *Introduction to Sport Marketing.* Routledge.

9. Appendices

Appendix 0: File Library

File	Read yet?	Created By
2011 Annual Report	TL SS DG NB	SNZ
2011 Task Force Final Report	NB	SNZ
A Paper on Change - Towards 2020	TL	SNZ
Driving Forces Report 2006	SS	SNZ
How to kill your club	SS	SNZ
HP SNZ Strategic Plan 2013-2020	TL	SNZ
Infosheet ISquash Access	SS	SNZ
Infosheet Online Booking	SS	SNZ
Marketing for Squash	DG	DG
Newsletter Aug2012	NB	SNZ
Newsletter JuneJuly2012	NB	SNZ
Newsletter March 2012	SS	SNZ
Newsletter Oct2012	NB	SNZ

File	Read yet?	Created By
Newsletter Sept 2012	NB	SNZ
NZ national team names	NB	NB
Roadshow 2013 Options	SS	SNZ
Roadshow Poster 2012	SS	SNZ
SNZ AGM Minutes 2011	NB	SNZ
SNZ Roadshow 2012	SS	SNZ
SNZ SPARC Stakeholder Survey 2008	TL SS DG NB	SNZ
SNZ Stakeholder Survey 2011 Summary	TL SS DG NB	SNZ
SNZ Strategic Plan 2009-2012	TL SS DG NB	SNZ
SNZ Strategic Plan 2013-2015	TL SS DG NB	SNZ
SNZ Tournament Manual	TL	SNZ
T2020 Update December 2011	TL	SNZ
The Crellin Report 1993	TL	SNZ
Year of Women's Squash Campaign Club Kit	SS	SNZ