

Club Model: Case Study of Good Practice

Lurgan RFC

Model Club section:

Finance

Area of good practice:

Fundraising

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Overview

Lurgan RFC developed a Finance Committee in order to take a whole club approach to fundraising.

They looked at their structures and how a subcommittee focusing purely on finance and fundraising could help. As well as pinpointing their target amount and how they hoped to achieve this, their goal was also to develop an understanding from the membership around why raising money was needed and how beneficial it would be to the club as a whole.

Their key outcomes were to:

- Create an understanding in members about the need for fundraising and transparency around what the money will go towards
- Raise more than the minimum required for 'rugby costs' to aid retention/recruitment of players
- Create a 'feel good factor' around the club and its members

Within this case study there are a number of notable successes and positive impacts for Lurgan RFC and potentially some key learnings that other clubs could use in the future.



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What was delivered?

Lurgan RFC developed a Finance Committee to map out expected costs and manage the fundraising process for the whole club. Initially they calculated the bare minimum amount needed for 'rugby costs' (approx. £43K per year) and worked backwards from there to get an idea of how much is required. The Finance Committee then split the club into sections and agreed a target amount for each section to reach. A key part of their success was a plan to run similar events each year aimed at club members but without saturating the market. They understand that they would be asking the same people to put their hand in their pocket or attend every event, so they manage what & when they fundraise to target specific membership bases. For example, a pre match function for non-playing members, a Fashion Show/Cookery classes for mini parents, a Pig on the Spit post-match event for players, a Gala Ball for corporate sponsors.

Why was it successful?

Lurgan RFC's approach to fundraising was successful as the club decided to organise their volunteers into specific sections with a clear understanding of their role, their target amount and what the money would go towards. There was clear accountability from volunteers as the Finance Committee regularly updated club members on the current fundraising totals. This appeared to encourage 'Buy in' from members as there is transparency on how the club intends to use the money raised.

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Steps to success

Below are some of the notable steps taken to allow Lurgan RFC's fundraising plan to be successful:

- A Finance Committee established with fundraising targets calculated
- Each section has a target to achieve, and they understand the reasons why that money is needed. Each section is asked to cover their costs plus a specified amount.
- Appreciation that you cannot keep asking the same people to put their hand in their pocket – each fundraising event is targeting a specific group of members e.g., Fashion Show, Cooking Nights, Players BBQ
- Small volume of events with a large upside is seen as preferred approach
- Gala dinner focused mainly on sponsors and corporate earns around £35-38K of profit (£1000/1200 per table). A well ran event will equate to repeat business. Key is to get current, engaging guest speakers to headline the event.
- Offer of sponsorship packages to companies make the club around £15K a year. Gold package includes Advertising board at the ground, 2 international tickets, mentions on the website, photo with pro player (Jacob Stockdale/Louis Ludik) and an invite to a club dinner.

What has been the impact?

The immediate huge positive impact of Lurgan RFC's approach to fundraising lies in the fact that in recent years the club has become debt free. The structured processes outlined above have proven successful in all areas of the club playing its part with regards fundraising. Raising funds above and beyond the bare minimum has allowed the club to continue with events that playing members really enjoy (Tours, Bus Trips etc) which has seen a significant positive impact with regards the recruitment and retention of players.

Why is the Club better off?

- No longer in debt
- Load has been spread with Whole Club Approach to Fundraising
- Club members and volunteers engaged and understand the club's situation and the benefits
- Retention of current players and potential recruitment of new players

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What are the key learnings?

There are a number of key learnings that can be taken away from this particular case study:

- Calculate 'rugby costs' and work backwards with a plan to raise more than the bare minimum
- Spread events out across the year and think hard about which members you are targeting
- Do not overburden members with constant requests for money or attendance at events
- A Small volume of events with a large upside is seen as preferred approach. A well ran event will equate to repeat business.
- Develop structures with clearly defined roles and committees to create accountability. Possibly breaking the membership into certain sections and provide them a target to reach
- Be transparent with members about how much money you hope to/is required to fundraise and where that money will be going in order to benefit the whole club.