



BGA CLUB MANAGEMENT GUIDES

Publicity, Public Relations, Marketing and Communications

PUBLICITY, PR, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Importance of Communication

Communicating with your key stakeholders is vital. Having a sound communications strategy and regular comms activity will help you to promote the messages you want people to hear, whether it is good news or bad news. If you fail to communicate, people will tend to

- Make up some story in order to fill the gap
- Start rumours about what they think is going on
- Assume the worst (especially in a bad situation such as a serious accident)
- Lose interest and stop supporting the club

In the opposite direction, it is important for the club committee to keep communication open so that they hear what the members and other key groups are saying and thinking. Failure to get this side of communication right can lead to:

- Being unaware of members' dissatisfaction until they throw the committee out at the AGM
- Not understanding what sort of flying the members (and others) want and therefore failing to provide what is wanted
- Not taking advantage of a member's good ideas and suggestions and so missing an opportunity for a new or improved activity
- Not hearing when some external threat to the club is developing, such as increases in rates, a wind turbine development close by, or new regulations coming from Europe
- Being unaware of opportunities that may exist, for example for outside funding or an opportunity to promote the club at an event.

Keeping a two-way flow of information going will help the club to develop and remain strong.

The Audience

This wide topic, of Publicity, PR etc., can be split into its constituent headings as listed in the title. It can alternatively be considered on a basis of the audience being addressed. Starting from the centre and working outwards, this audience includes:

- Regular, committed and long-term members
- Members who attend occasionally and fly irregularly
- The families and colleagues of members
- Potential or actual trial lesson and course students
- Other groups and individuals within the sport (e.g. the BGA or your neighbouring clubs)
- The club's landlord and any other users of the same airfield or immediate area
- Neighbours and local landowners
- Local authority and local or regional sports organisations
- Local press, radio and TV
- Local schools and youth groups and other social groups
- Local businesses and organisations
- Libraries and other venues where club activities can be advertised

The Message

The message to be promoted to your audience will depend on whom you are addressing, what you want to achieve and what you want them to hear. Publicity, PR and marketing are all essentially forms of communication, so if you get communication right you will probably be managing all the rest. Examples of the messages you may want to promote are listed below and there are many others that could be added.

Regular, committed and long-term members	Come and fly more often Pay your bills promptly Come to a particular club activity (AGM, flying week, party etc)
Members who attend occasionally and fly irregularly	Come and fly more often Tell us why you don't come more often What could we do better?
The families and colleagues of members	This is what gliding is about Would you like to try it?
Potential or actual trial lesson and course students	This is what gliding is about Come and try it and maybe take up the sport
Other groups and individuals within the sport (e.g. the BGA or your neighbouring clubs)	We have a successful activity that we'd like to shout about We are having a problem and would appreciate some help Can we work together more closely?
The club's landlord and any other users of the same airfield or immediate area	This is what we do and how we do it How can we work together to everyone's advantage? Please tell us if you have any concerns
Neighbours, parish councils, environmental groups and local landowners	This is what we do and how we do it (would you like to have a go?) This is how we aim to operate without inconvenience to you Please tell us if you have any concerns
Local authority and local or regional sports organisations	This is what we do and how we do it Our local community benefits from having a gliding club nearby We can help you to meet some of your targets Offers & opportunities for STEM learning
Local press, radio and TV	Gliding is a wonderful sport! This is what we do and how we do it Please come and visit so that we can show you more

Local schools and youth groups and other social groups	<p>Gliding is a wonderful sport! Would you like a go?</p> <p>Can we come and give you a presentation about our club?</p> <p>How can we help you to achieve some of your objectives for your young people?</p> <p>Offers & opportunities for STEM learning</p>
Local businesses and organisations	<p>Gliding is a wonderful sport! Would a group of you like to come and have a go?</p> <p>Can we come and give you a presentation about our club?</p> <p>Would you be willing to support us with sponsorship or other support?</p>
Libraries and other venues and events where club activities can be advertised	<p>Gliding is a wonderful sport!</p> <p>Please can we put up regular advertisements or leaflets at your venue?</p> <p>Here is a glider – come and talk to us today!</p>

The Medium

With electronic communication, the opportunities and ways of communicating are extensive. Pick the right medium for the audience and the message you are promoting.

- Email – regular or one-off
- Letter – ditto
- Newsletter - electronic or postal
- Notice boards
- Press release - electronic or postal
- Advertisements, brochures, leaflets and posters
- Feature article
- Phone call
- Face-to-face discussion
- Meeting for a group
- Website
- Local media

Listening for messages

There are various ways of picking up incoming messages; some require more active work than others and the right ones to use will depend on what you are trying to hear. Get yourself on the system for regular updates, by email or hard copy, from useful organisations or individuals. These include the BGA, other sporting organisations and sources of local news. So that you have time to do justice to the useful ones, remove yourself promptly from any that turn out to be a waste of time.

Keep up to date with what is going on locally so that you are not taken by surprise when a windfarm springs up nearby or the major local employer makes half your members redundant.

Be available to your members and to other people – let them see that you are approachable and willing to listen if they have a problem or a complaint. However, be firm about when you are willing to talk club business and politics. For your own flying enjoyment and for safety reasons, if you are preparing to fly, have the confidence to refuse (politely!) to discuss business. Suggest to the member that it would be better to discuss it another time and agree when that might be. The exception should be if the matter is one of flying safety or immediate flying importance. Most importantly, keep your rigging, DI and cockpit check free of distractions. *‘The cockpit should be a committee-free environment.’*

Mechanics to use are similar to the outgoing communication:

- Face-to-face discussion
- Email – regular or one-off
- Letter – ditto
- Advertisements, news and articles in local media
- Local planning applications
- Phone calls
- Meeting for a group
- Websites