

# HOW TO MARKET YOUR LEAGUE:

THE COMPLETE GUIDE



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# INTRO

Growing a youth sports league can be difficult, especially when you're living the #volunteerlife. An essential part of growth is spreading the word, the mission, and the purpose of your youth sports organization.

This ebook is ideally suited to those involved in youth sports programs. A portion of those involved are without much spare time, but are still wanting to grow their their local youth sports organizations, so we've taken the whole of our marketing blog series and condensed it into an easy-to-follow ebook.

We'll cover basic concepts of marketing and how to apply these principles into real situations many youth league administrative volunteers are exposed to.

A combination of using online registration, league management tools, and basic marketing principles, and league, regardless of size, can properly market their league with ease and boost their league's growth.



## BUT FIRST, LET'S START WITH THE BASICS.



# CHAPTER 1: MARKETING ESSENTIALS

## WHAT IS MARKETING AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR MY YOUTH SPORTS LEAGUE?

What is Marketing: the action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising.

Why is Marketing important: As the youth sports industry continues to grow, properly marketing your league will become as vital as running your league. You can't start an organization or more importantly, grow it without effectively getting the word out.

This can be done strategically, when taking the following into consideration:

## THE 4 P'S OF MARKETING: PRODUCT, PRICE, PLACE, & PROMOTION

The 4 P's of Marketing are coined as a process to describe the way all companies, small or large, target their audiences, while differentiating themselves from their competitors.

Here is an outline of what the 4 P's look like for most youth sports organizations:



**PRODUCT:** The service of providing youth sports activities to consumers, such as youth baseball/softball programs

**PRICE:** The costs of [registration](#), equipment, time, and [fan wear](#) parents pay for

**PROMOTION:** Relevant content and channels for advertising your youth sports league

**PLACE:** Sports leagues are seasonal, so advertise your organization in the right place, at the right time



As intimidating as they seem, every organization utilizes these points instinctively. For example, as your league's season approaches, your team might start to pass out flyers at local schools around your community, or your organization might host a car wash to raise money for your league. Marketing your league can be done at all levels – whether it's a grassroots approach or you decide to focus on a digital strategy.

What's most important is how your organization executes your marketing game plan, while seamlessly taking the 4 P's into consideration.



**REMEMBER: WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER.**

No matter how big or small your youth sports association is, there is always room to grow; meaning, you will always need to be marketing your league. But, marketing your league doesn't need to take up all of your time.

# CHAPTER 2: TAKE A DIGITAL APPROACH



**80% OF CONSUMERS USE  
SEARCH ENGINES TO FIND  
LOCAL INFORMATION.**

(Think with Google, 2014)

Focusing on a digital footprint for youth sports leagues is vital to growing your business and creating awareness. We all use some form of search engines, especially when searching for local businesses and services. So, why not let that reasoning apply to your youth sports organization?

## LOCAL ONLINE PRESENCE

Building an online presence is crucial, especially for small businesses and local organizations. Having an established online presence, and continuing to update your websites and social media pages, will aid in building trust and transparency with potential customers and help retain current customers.

## GOOD WEBSITE DESIGN

It is crucial to build or [find a website design](#) that not only works for your youth sports league, but stays up-to-date with website trends – especially when it comes to your website being mobile-friendly.

Once you have picked a design for your youth sports website, it's time to take into consideration the way your website is built, as this can impact your visibility on search engines. [This article by Codeburst.io](#) explains more in depth, but check out this quick overview:

- **NAVIGATION**– Clearly labeled and defined locations for a potential customer to easily sign up and register.
- **CONTENT AND VISUAL ELEMENTS**– This could range from a type of font all the way to images of your youth sports league.
- **BRAND UNIFORMITY**– [Get a quality logo](#) that sets your league apart from others in your area.

- **ENGAGEMENT**– Make sure your website is appealing and filled with relatable content to engage your current and potential customers.
- **SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION**– An optimized website increases accessibility by expanding your website’s search rankings.  
[Learn more here in our other blog post!](#)

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media channels are helpful tools if used properly. You’ll see companies, like [Slack](#) or [Zendesk](#), turn to Twitter as part of their support channels. This way, customers can simply send a tweet asking for help and receive support promptly.

Posting important information on your league’s [Facebook](#) page is another way for local clientele to easily find your organization online. As mentioned before, it also helps build trust as information is updated and keeps current and potential customers stay informed on important news.

Plus, having your website integrated with your social media channels is just as necessary for growing awareness! Your customers should always be encouraged to share their experiences with your organization on social media.

## **ADS**

To take it one step further, if you’re interested (and have the bandwidth), social media advertisements can make an impact on growing your local organization. Facebook allows you to easily target within a range of an area and is equipped with tools to create a target audience.

For a more in depth step by step guide on creating Facebook advertisements, take a look at [this article by Hubspot](#).

## **STAY CONNECTED**

We brushed on building trust and updating content on your league’s website and social media pages, but there are more ways to have a bigger impact on your clientele.

Staying connected with current customers and potential customer is vital! Make sure to utilize communications tools that allow for you to connect with both audiences for all occasions. For example, you can easily send emails to update your league’s members to congratulate them on finishing a strong season. Every interaction counts!



# CHAPTER 3: THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a tool all small businesses should leverage, especially in youth sports. Before diving into the ways your youth sports organization can use social media, let's go over why it's important.

We touched on this in our [previous marketing tips blog](#), but according to [Post Planner](#), here are the advantages to successfully using social media for your small business:

- **BUILD A CREDIBLE REPUTATION**- what do people think of your organization?
- **BRAND AWARENESS**- are you relevant in your area?
- **STAY RELEVANT**- do you post regularly?
- **INCREASE REACH**- how will potential customers find out about your organization?
- **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**- how will current customers stay informed?

Social media is an engaging and inexpensive way (most of the time free) to successfully achieve all of the above points. However, most youth leagues are made up of volunteers dedicating their personal time, which is limited. But, using social media doesn't have to be time consuming.

Next step: implementing practical, successful social media strategies. Here are some questions to consider before dedicating too much of your time to different social media channels:

- What do most of your customers use for social media?  
**Facebook, Twitter, Instagram?**
- What are other **youth sports organizations in your area** doing on social media?
- How much **time a week** do you have to dedicate to using social media?
- Are you trying to **communicate with customers?** Are you trying to grow your league?
- What **type of content** will you post?
- How is your **current online presence?**

A lot of these points might be answered with “nothing” at the moment, especially if your youth sports organization hasn’t started using any social media. However, it’s extremely easy to get caught up in all of the different channels of social media, or the type of posts your organization wants to use, without spending time and resources wisely.

Just don’t give up and do nothing. Here’s why:

A hand holding a smartphone, displaying a sports stadium on the screen. The phone is held against a blue background with a blurred crowd. Overlaid on the phone screen is a quote in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

**“IT’S NO LONGER A QUESTION OF ‘IF’  
YOU SHOULD GET ON SOCIAL MEDIA,  
BUT INSTEAD ‘WHAT’ SOCIAL MEDIA  
YOU SHOULD FOCUS ON.”**

**(Capterra, 2018)**

Being limited in resources, youth sports organizations should be as targeted as possible. So to get you started, check out these tips:

- **CHOOSE ONE PLATFORM TO START** - Whether it's Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, get a feel for what your customers will likely use the most and start there. Master that one and if you feel it's needed, and have the time, move onto the next social media platform!  
**\*Your safest bet is start with Facebook\***
- **SET CONTENT GOALS** - Once you've chosen your designated social media page, choose what type of content you want to post. Informational, fun topics, or just updates on your league, you're totally in control. **Just make sure the content fits your audience—parents and players.**
- **GET BEHIND THE ALGORITHMS** - This is especially important if you're leveraging your social media pages to grow your league. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter reward users who get more interactions by showcasing their posts more than others. So, find out what works best with your audience and **what posts get the most interactions and responses.**
- **INTERACT WITH CUSTOMERS** - Players and parents want to interact with your organization. Whether it's giving them a shoutout on your page, or asking them to give your organization a follow on Facebook, your customers will appreciate the connection.
- **BE UNIQUE** - As generic as this is, small businesses need to be unique in the way they frame themselves online, even at the local level. Check out what other youth sports organizations are doing and **find your brand.**



# RECAP: WHAT COMES NEXT?

You've read the overview of what is marketing and why you should market your league. So, here's the how:

- ☐ **DEFINE YOUR LEAGUE'S AUDIENCE**
- ☐ **ASSES YOUR LEAGUE'S MARKETING NEEDS**
- ☐ **COME UP WITH A STRATEGY**
- ☐ **EXECUTE YOUR MARKETING PLAN**
- ☐ **STAY ENGAGED WITH CUSTOMERS**
- ☐ **PROVIDE THE BEST CUSTOMER SUPPORT POSSIBLE**
- ☐ **GET REFERRALS!**