MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMERCIAL STRATEGY

2015 – 2017

DECEMBER 2015

ENGLAND squash

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This strategy interlinks, supports and builds on our other three key strategic initiatives: Game Changer, Performance: A New Era, and Insight.

It delivers a marketing, communications and commercial framework that redefines the way the organisation and the sport is communicated and promoted.

KEIR WORTH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Through our Game Changer (participation) and Performance Strategies, we have already begun to implement a series of radical changes required to revitalise the grassroots game and build towards sustainable success at elite level.

It has become evident through an extended consultation with stakeholders and members that the organisation's ability to effectively promote and communicate itself and the game has, historically, been severely flawed. It is vital to address this and create a free-flowing and constructive dialogue that is relevant to our various audiences. In addition to this, the organisation needs to develop an attitude that leads towards self-sufficiency rather than dependency.

This strategy sets out our intent to align all our marketing, communication and commercial activities in line with existing strategies and the overarching vision, to become the number one racket sport in England.

We are grateful for the continued support from Sport England as well as other key stakeholders, as we progress towards our vision.

"WE WILL ENTHUSE THE NATION AND CREATE A POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF SQUASH."

DARREN BERNSTEIN
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

England Squash must embrace the findings of our extensive research and insight. It tells us that members, participants and stakeholders want a governing body that communicates and informs them of its work and creates great products that leads the sport forward to new audiences and improves the experience of those already within it.

We will embody the needs of our stakeholders through our values and behaviours with clear and consistent communication whether that be to providers or participants. We will ensure that through our products, designed from our insight work, we drive the sport forward to ensure that marketing and communication is central to achieving the goals set out in England Squash's Game Changer document. Finally, we will strive to diversify our income streams by taking a strategic and planned approach, ensuring our events, membership and commercial properties are maximised.

England Squash's Marketing, Communication and Commercial Strategy sets out how the organisation will move forward for the first time in a planned and strategic manner, in a discipline that it has yet to embrace wholeheartedly. The document intends to provide funders and stakeholders with the confidence that the organisation and sport is moving, at pace, in the right direction.

"WE WILL USE BOLD AND INNOVATIVE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS TO REINVIGORATE INTEREST, GROW THE SPORT, AND TO ASSIST US IN ACHIEVING GREATER COMMERCIAL SUSTAINABILITY."

OVERVIEW

Set against a backdrop of declining participation, the contrasting but unheralded success at elite level and coupled with significant reliance on Sport England, England Sqhash and the sport itself is faced with a range of diverse, yet inter-related challenges, namely:

How do we create strong strategic allegiances with our key stakeholders and effective engagement with our members?

A legacy of neglect must be reversed by implementing pro-active, controlled and tailored communication planning that encourages a feedback-rich relationship.

How do we connect and engage with people so they participate in the way that suits them?

As well as changing the way people think about squash, we need to promote easy-to-access formats of the game that fit their lifestyle and personal goals.

How do we encourage investment in the sport?

There is no commercial model to rebuild. The organisation must seek to understand and maximise its assets in line with insight and consideration to the needs of potential strategic commercial partners.

- **New brand values** and culture embedded throughout the organisation and full implementation of branding collateral
- New membership and affiliation offer operational with a **100% increase** in profit
- Implement a fully functional technology platform, and grow our database from **20,000 to 40,000** full and clean membership records
- Increase the revenue and value of commercial activities by **250%**
- Implement a **fit-for-purpose structure** for the Department

For ease of reference this strategy document is divided into three component parts:

1 COMMUNICATION

Deliver the relevant information to all stakeholders in a timely way through channels appropriate to the audience.

2 MARKETING

Promote the sport and the organisation across all market segments in a way that embodies our brand and values.

3 COMMERCIAL

Drive new and diverse income streams in order to create greater commercial sustainability for the organisation in both the short and long term.

1 COMMUNICATION

BACKGROUND
THE PERCEPTION OF ENGLAND SQUASH

The game of squash has stagnated in the minds of consumers and the reputation of England Squash within the game is that of an organisation lacking direction and leadership without the ability to engage effectively with our stakeholders and members.

Whilst the marketing component of this strategy will help reposition the sport by challenging misconceptions and promoting new ways to engage with squash, it is only through more effective communications that the organisation will establish itself in the minds of stakeholders, members and players as the rightful custodian for the sport in England.

Our goal is to move from an organisation perceived by the majority as unsupportive, poorly led, ineffective communicators and elitist to one that the majority perceive as effective custodians of the sport and a relevant and desired partner.

Our recent brand work revealed current perceptions and provides a benchmark for future surveys that will be conducted on an annual basis in the future, commencing spring 2016.

STRATEGIC
GOALS

- **Adopt a style and tone of voice** for all communications that aligns with the new England Squash brand and England Squash's vision for the sport as a whole
- Among all communication channels, ensure an appropriate **balance between elite and participation content**
- Through a thorough analysis of the available channels and resources, ensure we **utilise the most efficient and effective** means possible to communicate
- **We will be more visible** to all our stakeholders, providers, counties, clubs and individuals
- **Review** current roles and responsibilities within the Department

MEASUREMENT

Measurement will be achieved by assessing both outputs and outcomes; what we do and the impact it has.

Outputs will relate to the volume, content, tone and channels utilised in line with the communication audit.

Outcomes will be benchmarked, by survey, on an annual basis against the Brand Audit conducted in the spring of 2015.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

01 AUDIENCE

TO WHOM ARE WE COMMUNICATING?

The England Squash audience can be broadly classified as:

02 THEMES

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

There are a range of themes for outbound communication that are essential to fulfil the overall strategy of the organisation. Themes must be matched appropriately to both audience and channel.

03 METHOD

WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO USE?

N.B. All digital communications also fit within the remit of the Technology Platform project. However, this strategy seeks to accommodate current and future delivery methods to avoid unnecessary delay in implementation.

> WE WILL POSITION THE GAME IN SUCH A WAY THAT CURRENT PLAYERS ARE REINVIGORATED AND NEW AUDIENCES ARE INSPIRED TO GET INVOLVED.

04 MESSAGE

WHAT IS IT WE ARE TRYING TO SAY?

In line with the Brand Guidelines all communication should follow a specific tone of voice and use appropriate language.

05 CONTEXT

WHAT ELSE MAY BE AFFECTED?

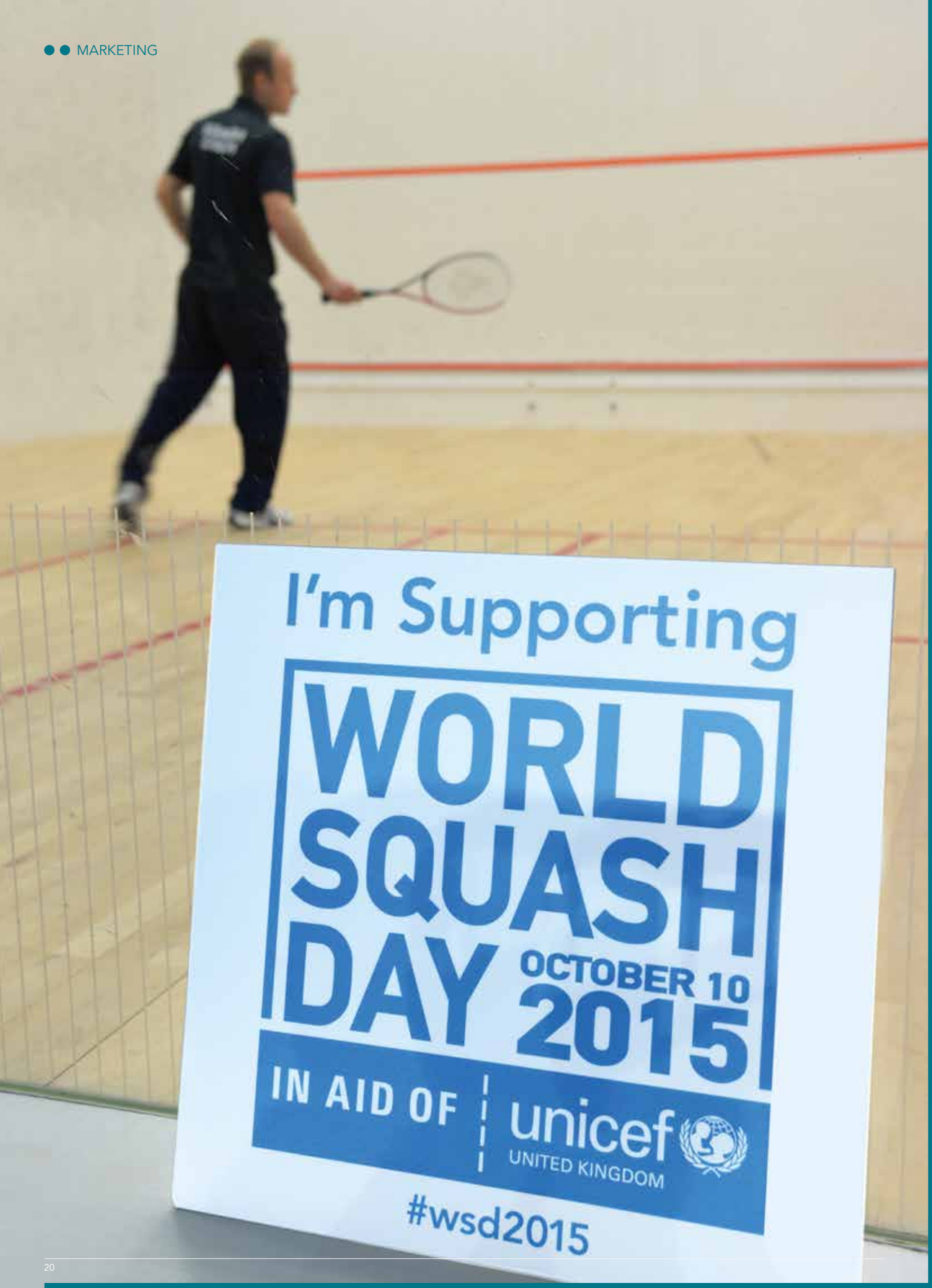
Given the number of initiatives underway there are likely to be few communications that do not relate to other projects or dependencies.

We will implement regular, structured briefings to all key stakeholders to minimise crossover and avoid danger of 'mixed messaging'.

06 TIME

WHAT IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE TIMEFRAME TO WORK WITHIN?

The timing of a message can be as important as the content. Consideration must always be given to when it is the most appropriate time to make the communication.


I'm Supporting
WORLD SQUASH DAY
OCTOBER 10 2015
IN AID OF
unicef
UNITED KINGDOM
#wsd2015

2
MARKETING

BACKGROUND
DRIVING PARTICIPATION & REFRAMING PERCEPTION

Research makes it clear that England Squash is little known and less well understood, particularly in relation to participation.

The marketing that has been undertaken has regularly failed to achieve the desired impact. Insight indicates that this is due to a fractured approach, promoting individual initiatives without effectively harnessing the ready-made distribution network offered by clubs, leisure providers and education.

The focus of this marketing strategy is to support the goals of the Game Changer Strategy, namely to engage with and encourage people to play squash. In doing this we must tackle negative perceptions, encouraging participation and enjoyment of the game irrespective of ability, gender, ethnicity or social status.

Resources do not permit direct investment in public engagement campaigns. Therefore the majority of marketing support will be delivered via clubs, leisure providers and our education partners with whom we are actively developing our relationships through implementation of the Communication Strategy.

England Squash will have a much closer relationship with The England Squash Foundation, working together to ensure that the programmes put into place by the Foundation are promoted and publicised.

All marketing materials, irrespective of the promoted product or message, will carry consistent brand messaging; visually and tone of voice. For the first time the organisation will have a comprehensive and actively controlled set of Brand and Marketing Guidelines.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Participation – to reposition squash as a sport and exercise of choice, for all people irrespective of ability, background or previous experience.

- **Launch and promote** products and campaigns that redefine the ways in which squash is played and promoted, working with partners where appropriate
- **Reposition squash** as a desirable fitness and leisure activity in terms of perceptions and evidenced through participation levels
- **Develop a clean and relevant** database underpinned by an all-encompassing technology platform
- **Review the values, culture and direction** of the organisation and develop a new brand to reflect these
- **Create new branding** and collateral to represent the new brand
- **Review** current roles and responsibilities within the Department

MEASUREMENTS

Number of campaigns to be delivered and their effectiveness:

● Delivery of re-brand, 2 new participation products and a membership solution.

●● Maintain a clean and growing database of participants to 40,000.

●●● Identify baseline data for the perception of stakeholders in England Squash's guardianship and development of the sport, and set appropriate improvement targets

●●●● Increase participation by 11,000

Manchester
NON MARKING SOLES ONLY

MEASUREMENT

CLUBS	PUBLIC & PRIVATE LEISURE	EDUCATION
1,575 COURTS	1,877 COURTS	738 COURTS
526 SITES	768 SITES	297 SITES
101,000 Weekly Participants	88,000 Weekly Participants	21,000 Weekly Participants
+4,000 TARGET INCREASE	+5,000 TARGET INCREASE	+2,000 TARGET INCREASE

"OUR PARTICIPATION GOALS FOR THE SPORT HAVE BEEN CLEARLY ESTABLISHED IN GAME CHANGER. IN ADDITION TO THIS, WE WILL WORK WITH OUR DELIVERY PARTNERS TO REGULARLY BENCHMARK THEIR CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF SQUASH.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

MARKETING TOOL-KIT

We already have insight from delivery partners that they will benefit from a suite of materials, provided by England Squash. Although we will focus on digital collateral. We will also accommodate printed collateral requests where a business case exists.

We will also promote England Squash's role and commitments direct to our delivery partners.

PRODUCT PROMOTION

The Game Changer strategy has resulted in the creation of new ways to play and enjoy squash; irrespective of experience.

As explained previously, in essence England Squash 'manufacture' the product and our delivery partners are the 'distributors'. This is a critical repositioning in the way we promote squash. Although we are seeking to reach and connect with players, we are custodians of the game. The day-to-day relationship exists between delivery partner and player.

Squash will be delivered by our partners and 'powered' by England Squash.

Taking the above into account, marketing activity will be two-fold:

Delivery Partner focus – we can only grow through our products if they find the proposition compelling enough to commit. We will produce a 'sales' pack that accommodates playing and financial perspectives.

Player focus – we will support our delivery partners through the provision of marketing materials that they can distribute to their customers. This will comprise a digital tool-kit of core collateral with the opportunity for partners to incorporate their own details on specific items.

EVENT PROMOTION

There are a range of events throughout England; from the British Open to localised tournaments. All events and competitions affiliated to England Squash will have access to and be encouraged to use a suite of digital marketing materials that can be tailored to their particular event.

Any events 'owned' by England Squash will be promoted strictly in line with brand guidelines.

England Squash is in the process of compiling its own Competitions and Events Strategy which when completed will provide direction for this part of the business not only from a commercial basis but also a performance and participation legacy point of view.

> WE WILL REDEFINE SQUASH AS SOMETHING TO BE ENJOYED BY ANYONE IN THEIR OWN WAY. WE WILL POSITION THE GAME IN SUCH A WAY THAT CURRENT PLAYERS ARE REINVIGORATED AND NEW AUDIENCES ARE INSPIRED TO GET INVOLVED.

3 COMMERCIAL

BACKGROUND
DIVERSIFYING AND ATTRACTING NEW INCOME STREAMS

Squash in England remains a significant, if minority, sport attracting in the region of 200,000 players per week across 4,500 courts. Despite criticisms of the organisation membership exceeds 40,000.

Squash also regularly tops the list of calorie-burning activities. It is relatively cheap to play, and is unaffected by weather.

Although we do not underestimate the challenge, we believe that, packaged and presented in the correct way, squash provides a strong vehicle for the right partner(s) to connect with our players.

COMMERCIAL PARTNERS

In excess of 75% of England Squash funding comes from Sport England. Little income is generated by commercial partnerships. The Allam Powerhouse title sponsorship is the exception to this with an arrangement in place until 2017.

Taking the above into account, the actual amount of commercial revenue secured by the organisation not tied to specific events is £8,000.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership currently accounts for 9% of our income. Research informs us that the current membership offer is neither understood nor provides meaningful benefits to the member.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

England Squash also needs to become more aware of the commercial needs of its delivery partners, ensuring that any initiatives take into account the impact on them. This is particularly relevant to the introduction of new products.

STRATEGIC GOALS
IDENTIFY THE COMMERCIAL ASSETS

The overriding goal is to create a rights holding that is both substantial and flexible enough to provide a genuine appeal to potential commercial partners.

Achieving the above requires a comprehensive audit of existing and potential inventory and assets, across the entire organisation, prior to assembling a viable commercial proposition. This includes events, participation products, elite, and membership. The Technology Platform programme, underway at the time of writing, is key to our ability to deliver an effective commercial proposition.

CREATE THE RIGHTS HOLDING

The overriding goal is to create a rights holding defined by its component assets that enables constructive dialogue with potential partners.

RESTRUCTURE THE COMMERCIAL ASSETS

We will conduct a complete audit and restructuring of our potential assets taking into account the elite programme, events and competitions, membership and participation products.

In tandem with the above, the development of the technology platform, implementation of the communication strategy and new product launches via partners enhance our ability to construct a compelling commercial proposition.

It is our goal to increase the revenue and value of commercial partnerships by 250% by 2017.

MEMBERSHIP

We will increase our membership revenue by growing the membership base and restructuring the membership proposition.

The membership proposition will be re-evaluated, following consultation, with a view to introducing a membership structure that reflects the members' needs and provides a benefits package commensurate with subscription levels and that reflects stakeholder interests.

In line with the above, we must create a re-calibrated membership proposition that provides compelling reason and reward for new players to 'join' England Squash and embraces the research and insight undertaken through our insight strategy.

It is our goal to increase the profits from our membership scheme by 100% by 2017, in order for us to reinvest this back into the sport.

N.B. The launch of the revised membership scheme is directly linked to the development of the technology platform.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

We will create a financial modelling tool to demonstrate to providers the benefits of promoting squash as a revenue generator.

Squash is entirely facilities dependent and it is critical that we arrest the demise of squash courts by 'standing in the shoes' of our delivery partners – not only by promoting squash to players for its health and happiness benefits but also to educate and incentivise delivery partners in relation to the commercial benefits of squash.

We will work closely with the England Squash and Racketball Foundation to maximise funding opportunities to reinvest back into the sport.

We will benchmark the impact of this initiative through appropriate measures in collaboration with our delivery partners.

- **Create the rights holding** for an attractive sponsorship offer at all levels
- **Introduce a membership** and affiliation proposition that reflects the needs of both members and affiliated clubs, offering attractive and relevant benefits for each
- **Develop a single, clean and sophisticated** database to drive commercial revenue
- **Explore and implement** opportunities for driving commercial income through merchandising
- Through implementation of the new brand, **review and develop** endorsement and partnership opportunities
- **Design a programme** of events and competitions that is commercially viable, encourages participation and supports the talent and elite pathway
- Work with the Squash & Racketball Foundation to closer align the work of both organisations in order to **drive opportunities to increase participation**

MEASUREMENT
DEFINING OUR SUCCESS

It is important that England Squash can track the success of this strategy. The measures should be a mixture of completing large projects and work programmes, quantitative targets and qualitative perceptions.

"WE ARE COMMITTED TO MEASURING OUR PROGRESS AND ASSESSING OUR IMPACT USING APPROPRIATE METHODOLOGY TO DEFINE OUR WORK, WHILE USING ALL INSIGHT GAINED TO DIRECT OUR FUTURE."

Little
Betters

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