

**CHANGE
OUR
GAME**

WOMEN IN SPORT AND RECREATION

COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

Developed in conjunction with



**Victorian Equal Opportunity
& Human Rights Commission**





SMART STRATEGIES — FOR — MARKETING TO WOMEN

THE *CHANGE OUR GAME* COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING REFERENCE GUIDE FOR WOMEN IN SPORT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED FOR COMMUNITY SPORT AND RECREATION ORGANISATIONS LOOKING TO DEVELOP INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING PRACTICES.

EFFECTIVE MARKETING CAN PLAY A KEY ROLE HELPING ORGANISATIONS INCREASE MEMBERSHIP, IMPROVE CULTURE, ATTRACT COMMERCIAL SUPPORT, AND CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING STRONGER AND HEALTHIER LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

No two sports will market sport and recreation to women in the same way, but there are some common approaches, principles and values that can help guide you.

Emphasise that your sport/club is welcoming

Put yourself in the position of a newcomer. It can be intimidating to try something new or start out in a new club environment. If your sport or recreational activity can support newcomers and women of all abilities, highlight this in your marketing communications. This will help you connect with potential new members, some of who may have some reservations.

Actively promote diversity

Diversity and gender equality go hand-in-hand. If every member of your community sees a bit of themselves reflected in your sport / club you will have broader appeal.



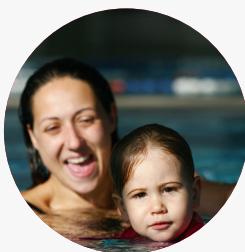
SHOWCASE different ways in which women of all backgrounds and abilities can be involved.



HIGHLIGHT strategies you have in place to support gender equality, diversity and inclusion at your club.



CELEBRATE active female participation across all roles at your club.



WELCOME families of all kinds and embrace family diversity.



EMPHASISE that people are welcome to participate in ways appropriate to their culture and faith.



PROMOTE the [Fair Play Code](#), which sends a clear message that poor behaviour, violence and discrimination has no place in sport and recreation in Victoria.

R WITH

80%

OF LEAGUE MEMBERS
IDENTIFYING AS QUEER, WE
VALUE
THE IMPORTANCE
OF FOSTERING
SAFE SPACES
AND ACTIVELY OPPOSING AND
PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION

LAUREN FOOTE -
VICTORIAN ROLLER
DERBY LEAGUE.



Visibly demonstrate how your programs might be suitable for a wide range of women

The language in your marketing material should promote how your programs meet the needs of different groups. Broad examples of these include:

- pregnant women
- older women
- new mums
- women with a disability
- women recovering from an illness or injury
- LBTIQ+ women
- Aboriginal women
- women of different cultural and religious backgrounds
- women with work and/or caring commitments.

Check in regularly with women and girls

It's important to check in with the women and girls involved in your organisation and seek feedback.

Don't assume that because things had been managed in the past in a particular way that you need to continue down that path. The way you communicate and market your offerings should be an evolving strategy, and it's important to ensure you are meeting current and prospective participants' needs. Ask for feedback on your communication materials and reflect it in your future marketing.

Marketing to women checklist:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Are women in leadership roles depicted in your marketing material? |  Does your marketing material highlight ways in which women and girls of all abilities can participate? |
|  Does your club promote ways for families and women who are time-poor to participate? |  Does your marketing material celebrate a range of on and off-field roles women can get involved in eg. players, officials, coaches, administration, etc? |
|  Does your marketing material celebrate the contribution, participation and leadership of women and girls from diverse backgrounds? |  Does your club's marketing material highlight a range of physical and social benefits your sport delivers? |

Practical Example – Bowls Victoria

Bowls Victoria actively promotes opportunities for women and girls to be involved in bowls and encourages women to be active within a social community network. 'Bowling with Babies' is a family friendly club environment developed for new and expecting mothers. It provides a social outlet to get out of the house and talk with other parents, all while enjoying a game of bowls and a coffee.

Why this flyer ticks the boxes:



A woman wearing a bicycle helmet and glasses, smiling, stands next to a bicycle. A young child wearing a helmet and a striped sweater also stands next to a bicycle. They are set against a background of red and orange dots.

SMART STRATEGIES — FOR — SELECTING IMAGERY

Selecting the right images for your marketing materials can make a big difference to engaging with women and girls.

It is important to have a variety of images to use in your communications, therefore you may need to build a bank of images to ensure you have a diverse range to select from.

It is important to understand what permissions are required when using imagery:

- Make sure you always receive permission from people to use their photo, and get permission from parents/carers for girls under 18.
- If you are using images from another source, make sure you ask permission and if permission is granted, credit appropriately.

Don't be limited in your image selection

Showcase women and girls of different backgrounds, ages, body shapes and abilities. From grassroots through to elite, select images of people doing great things in your sport or activity. Highlight leadership pathways for girls and women, for example, development programs targeting women taking leadership roles.

Use relatable, real life imagery and stories and actively promote diversity

Ask yourself:

- What is the message you're trying to convey?
- Will women and girls connect with the images you are using?
- Are you using a variety of images to demonstrate diversity in your club?

Show the full range of benefits sport and recreation offers to women and girls

Consider using some of the following in your photos and stories of women and girls:

- women as participants, officials, coaches and leaders
- the social aspect of sport (e.g. social interactions and making friends across all ages)

- the physical aspect of sport (e.g. getting sweaty, having fun and not needing to be super fit or coordinated, not needing designer sportswear)
- the initial rewards of sport (e.g. self-fulfilment, challenging yourself and achieving goals).

Be authentic about how you promote diversity

It might be tempting to use publicly available images – known as stock images – to showcase a diverse range of participants in your sport. However overuse of stock images can be obvious and come across as non-authentic. If the diversity in the photos you use doesn't realistically match the diversity in your club, it can put people off.

Your aim should be to showcase diversity in your club and how important it is to your club.



Practical Example - VicHealth This Girl Can - Victoria

The This Girl Can Victoria campaign, which features real, everyday Victorian women instead of professional athletes or toned Instagram models, inspired an incredible one in seven Victorian women to get moving in its first year alone.

This Girl Can Victoria is a celebration of women doing their thing and being active – no matter how they look, how good they are, or how sweaty they get. This Girl Can Victoria supports gender equality through challenging traditional gender roles and celebrating women who are fit and strong.

The campaign features the voices and stories of diverse women from right across Victoria – younger and older women, mums and non-mums, women from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, women from culturally diverse backgrounds, women with disabilities, women from across the LBTIQ+ community, women with lower incomes or education levels, and women living in metro, regional and disadvantaged areas.



DEB



MIRANDA



MICHELLE



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SABRIN



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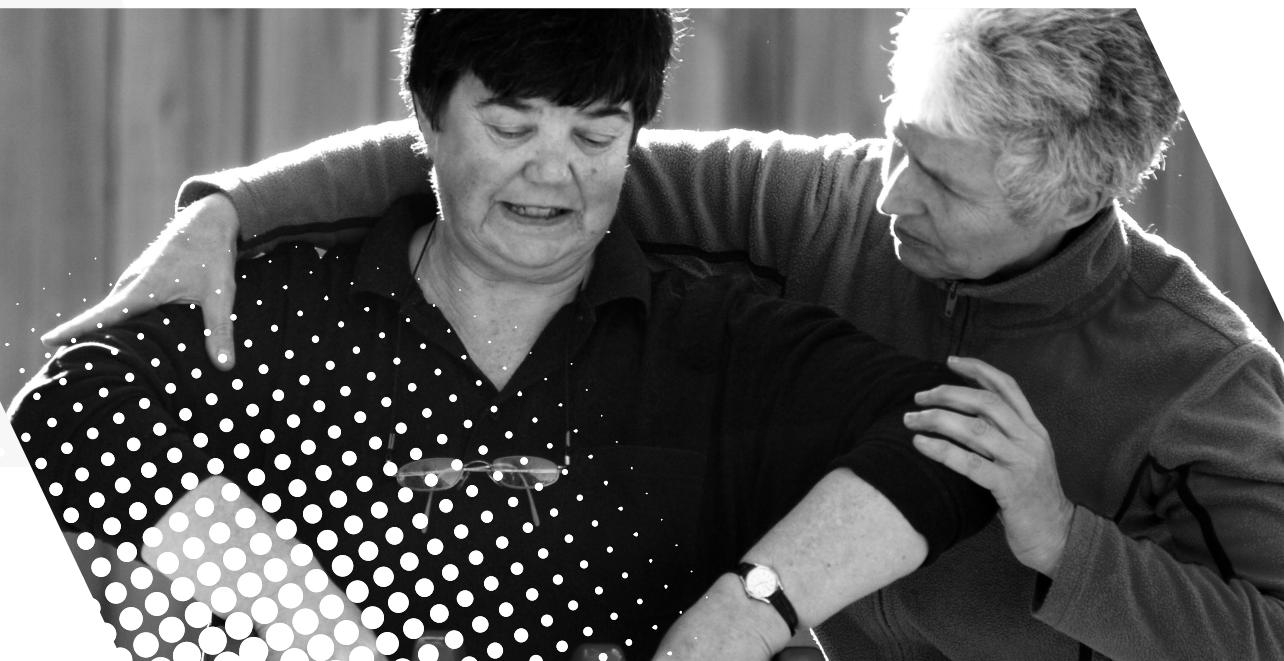
SARAH



MELINDA



TINA



Melanie Fineberg – Manager Social Marketing at VicHealth shared the strategy and concepts behind the internationally acclaimed and highly successful campaign.

"What you see in our campaign is a celebration of everyday Victorian women giving it a go and getting active – running and tackling and puffing and sweating and laughing in all their glory – regardless of their background, ability, age or body shape." Melanie said.

"VicHealth research shows that 52% of Victorian women worry about being judged when exercising and for 41% of Victorian women that worry is so bad it stops them getting active at all. Selecting imagery which makes women feel included is so critical to helping turn this around."

The success of the campaign is testament to the impact of storytelling and the power of imagery.

"It's so important to use imagery of diverse, everyday women. The typical 'fitspiration' images of thin, fit women in hot pants and crop tops only alienate women even further by making them feel like they don't belong." She said.

"If women see images that they can relate to – other women just like them – then they're much more likely to feel welcome and they're much more likely to walk through the door.

"We've had such an overwhelmingly positive response from women since we launched the campaign in March 2018. In one woman's words: 'Something clicked when I saw the ads, which celebrated women of all shapes and sizes to get active. Suddenly, I could actually relate to them.' We've had so many women say the same thing, the response has been amazing."

Checklist: What you should keep in mind when selecting images

Carefully consider how people may interpret your images – always seek feedback when choosing which photo to use. Make sure your photos fully represent the values of your organisation, and **DO NOT**:

 potentially sexualise women or girls

 play into race stereotypes, such as the "all-Australian" blonde female

 imply the subject is unfit or unhealthy

 play into gender stereotypes such as the male doctor or female housewife.

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FROM GETTING ACTIVE AT ALL

- SOURCE VICHEALTH



A red-tinted photograph of a diverse group of people of various ages and ethnicities, some wearing glasses, gathered together in what appears to be a social media or technology-themed event. They are looking towards the right side of the frame, possibly at a screen or a presentation. The background is dark with some blurred lights and shapes.

SMART STRATEGIES — FOR USING — SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful communication tool when used well, or reputational risk if posts do not align with the expected behaviours and values of your club.

Your club's code of conduct should reference social media usage and a process should be in place if anyone breaches this.

Consider the following when communicating via social media:

Voice

Your club's social media voice should express the character and values of your club and should be consistent across all media. It should include language that is respectful and inclusive to all women and girls. Any post that may be perceived negatively by any segments of your community should not be published. If in doubt, don't post. Inappropriate posts should be removed as quickly as possible.

Multi-channel approach

Think beyond the traditional forms of communication. Ask yourself whether your communication channels include:

- various social media channels relevant to your current and potential audience
- flyers on community noticeboards at public places – for example, libraries and community centres, particularly if they host mothers' groups or social groups
- advertising through media such as community radio, local newspapers or social media channels
- partnerships with community organisations or peak bodies
- multicultural media.

Social media checklist

 Does your social media content and website communication reflect your commitment to inclusion?

 Are you using simple, direct language to convey a message?

 Are you using real life images and avoiding stereotypes?

 Talk straight, be transparent – your club's values should be reflected in your social media activity – if you have made a mistake, acknowledge it (apologise if appropriate) and move on.

 Are you posting content that celebrates all parts of your community e.g. women, men and children across all levels of competition?



Practical Example - Women of Melbourne Parkour (WoMP)

For active recreational group **Women of Melbourne Parkour (WoMP)** social media is the largest contributor to attracting new women.

WoMP Coach Kel Glaister took us through some of their social media quick wins.

"We have semi-regular introductory sessions for newcomers, and the Facebook events are an easy way to get people interested, and to reach much further than we could with any other medium.

"We're also a no-budget, volunteer run operation, so all of our promotional efforts have to be free or very cheap - social media fits that bill."

"We don't have a clubhouse or physical location like other physical disciplines do. So Facebook is the easiest way for use to communicate meeting times and locations to everyone.

"We have a social media strategy and we aim to post several times a week, with content that showcases the diversity and accessibility of our group - featuring women and girls of all sizes, ages, backgrounds, experience."

WoMP's top tips for using social media to attract women and girls to your organisation

Make sure to post content that features beginners at least as much as (preferably more than) you post content of highly skilled athletes or impressive feats.

Spectacular content can get likes and comments, but it can also be intimidating. Posts about the 50+ year olds at 'Bring-your-mum-to-parkour' sessions, or people training and having fun together are what will make people see themselves getting involved.

Use your own voice. There's no need to present your group in any particular light or according to someone else's model. If you are a bunch of massive dorks who like having fun together, then be a bunch of massive dorks on social media.

Share the workload. Social media is a beast that needs constant feeding - if it's left to only one person they'll burn out or get bored or resentful or just stop doing it. (Have a chat about the voice or tone of your social media first)

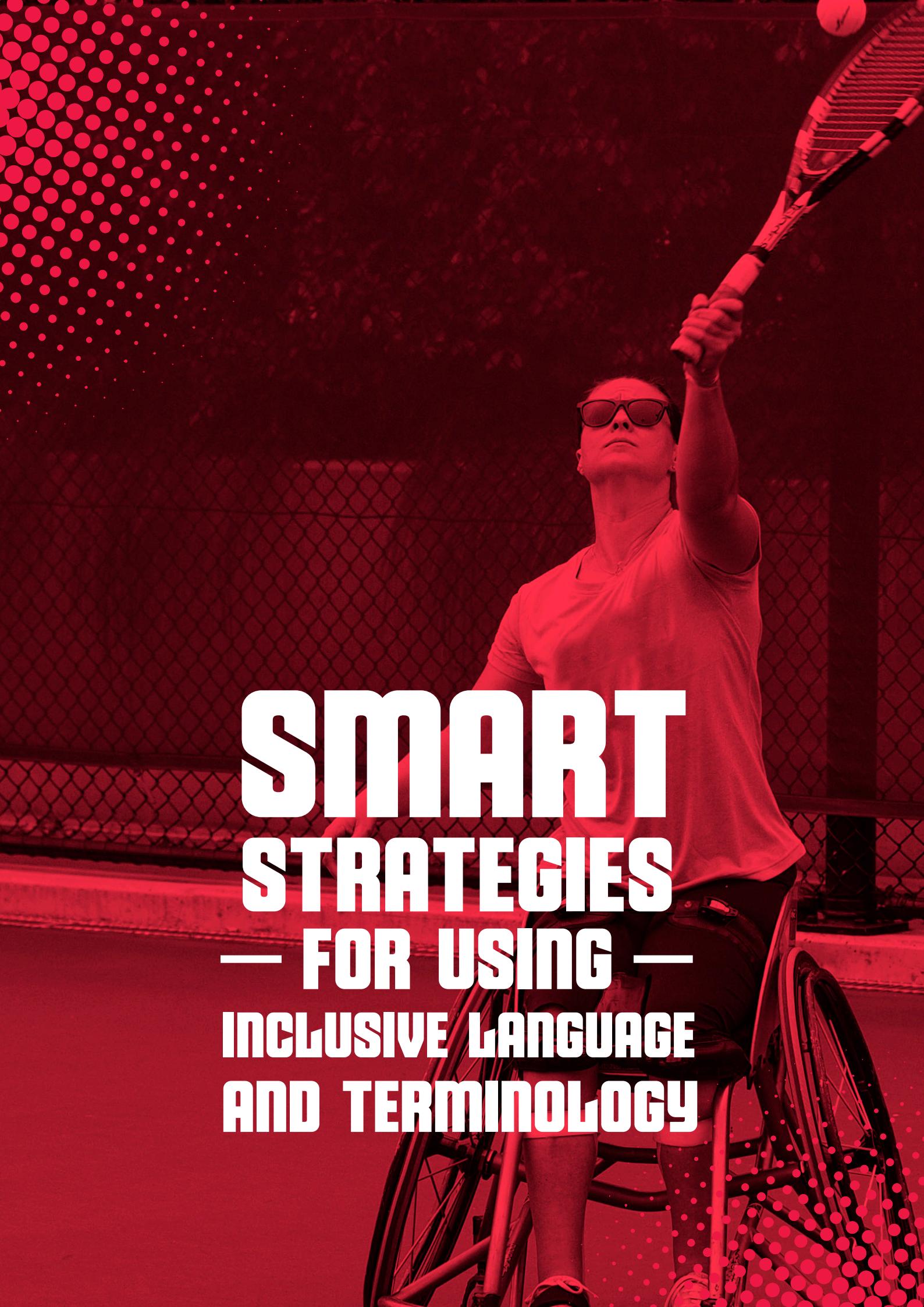
Don't let managing social media accounts suck the joy out of your training. Sometimes it seems like just another chore or distraction, and that's kind of what it is. As important as social media can be in attracting people to your discipline or group, it's never more important than your training.



A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a red tank top and grey sweatpants, climbing a dark, textured wall. She is using her hands and feet to grip the surface, looking upwards and to the right. The background is a blurred, reddish-brown color.

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RESENTFUL OR JUST STOP DOING IT.”

KEL GLAISTER
WOMEN OF MELBOURNE PARKOUR

A photograph of a person with short hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored t-shirt and dark pants, sitting in a wheelchair and holding a lacrosse stick. They are looking upwards and to the side. The background is a chain-link fence at night.

SMART STRATEGIES — FOR USING — INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

Inclusive language helps us demonstrate that we acknowledge and respect the different experiences of people around us.

Remember: no one will get inclusive language right every time in every situation. The important thing is to keep trying. If you make a mistake, apologise and learn from it so you don't make the same mistake again.

Equality

In an inclusive club or sport, everyone has equal access, status and opportunity to participate at every level, whether as players, referees, coaches, board and committee members or volunteers.

Tips to ensure gender equality is always a priority in your organisation:

- Focus on womens' and girls' sporting achievements, skills and talents (instead of their physical appearance, sexual orientation or relationship status)
- Avoid using terms such as 'darl', 'love', 'pet', 'babe', or 'sweetie'. Stick to terms that you would use for all players and members regardless of their gender. ie. team, players, squad, athletes etc.
- Avoid talking about 'the girls' competition' or the 'women's competition' as being different from 'standard' competition. Alternatively, if the distinction is important, make sure you apply it equally. This means referring to 'girls' and 'boys' competitions, and 'women's' and 'men's' competition. This shows that they are all equally valid competitions.

Gender identity and sexual orientation

It is important to ensure your language and communication does not discriminate against people's gender identity and sexual orientation.

A checklist for inclusive language:

Does your language demonstrate respect? It's important to respect how people describe themselves. If it's directly relevant, respectfully and privately ask someone what terms are appropriate for them, then use those terms. Let yourself be guided by how someone talks about or describes themselves

Use inclusive language consistently. If you use inclusive language consistently – not just in the presence of a 'diverse person' – this will send a clear message to other members of your club that your club is inclusive and welcoming.

Don't:

 Make assumptions. Generally, you can't tell if someone is trans or has a disability, or what their sexual orientation is, by looking at them.

 Use language that groups people based on their physical, sexual or other attributes.

Practical Example – Victorian Roller Derby League

VRDL prides itself on being an inclusive organisation made up of members who are passionate about empowerment and diversity. With 80% of league members identifying as queer, they value the importance of fostering safe spaces and actively opposing and preventing discrimination. The VRDL has zero tolerance for sexual assault and harassment.

With inclusivity a fundamental part of the league objectives and mission statement, VRDL embraces people of any age, size, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability and cultural background. They will provide an opportunity for all to thrive and prosper through participating in the sport and community of roller derby.

Captain of the Victorian Roller Derby League All Stars Lauren Foote shared some of the strategies Roller Derby has introduced to make sure their sport does not discriminate against people's gender identity and sexual orientation.

"Roller derby is a sport that continues to strive towards being inclusive to all people. We have a lot of participants who identify as non-binary, gender neutral, or they may be in the trans community.

"We sometimes wear pronoun's stickers (they/them, she/her, he/ him as some but not all examples), and

introduce ourselves with our pronouns.

"At games we regularly place signs over the toilets that say 'all gender' restroom to create a more inclusive space for all, as not everyone identifies as either male or female.

"In 2016 the World Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA) released a [gender statement](#) in which it committed to inclusive and anti-discriminatory practices in relation to all transgender women, intersex women, and gender expansive participants. An individual who identifies as a trans woman, intersex woman, and/or gender expansive may skate with a WFTDA charter team if women's flat track roller derby is the version and composition of roller derby with which they most closely identify."



Marko Niemelä Photography



"AT GAMES WE REGULARLY PLACE SIGNS OVER THE TOILETS THAT SAY 'ALL GENDER' RESTROOM TO CREATE A MORE INCLUSIVE SPACE FOR ALL."

LAUREN FOOTE

VICTORIAN ROLLER DERBY LEAGUE

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