

LITTLE LEAGUE® MARKETING PLAN

A well-constructed marketing plan is a valuable tool that can assist a league in organizing information to plan and prepare for the future. The template below has been designed to address the marketing needs of local Little League programs with a focus on program growth and awareness within the community. All leagues are strongly encouraged to complete and implement a marketing plan such as the one below. Please make copies of your plan available to the members of your league, as well as send a copy to Sam Ranck at sranck@LittleLeague.org.

GOALS

List 3-5 measurable goals that your league would like to achieve. Examples include increasing participation by a set number of players program wide or in a specific division, introducing a new division [e.g. Intermediate (50/70)] or program (Softball/Challenger), increasing the number of volunteers in your league, etc.

YOUR LEAGUE'S GOALS

Goal 1:
Goal 2:
Goal 3:
Goal 4:
Goal 5:

MARKET SUMMARY

This section of the plan should contain information about the demographics of individuals living within your league's boundaries, school enrollment information, information about current participation and information about competing organizations. This information will help your league determine the total number of potential participants, identify areas to target for future growth and determine overall market trends in the community.

MARKET DEMOGRAPHICS

City-data.com is an excellent source to gather information on your market demographics. School enrollment data is available on City-data.com or by contacting your local school district.

BOUNDARIES/GEOGRAPHY

Include a brief description of the geographical area that your league operates. You may also insert a copy of your league's boundary map here. Additionally, include a list of all schools that are located within your league's boundaries.

DEMOGRAPHICS

This section will help you determine the number of potential participants available to your league.

City-data.com provides accurate information on population and household information. It is searchable by municipality, county or zip code.

- A) Total Population:
- B) Percent of households with children under 18 (if available):
- C) Total number of children ages 4-18 in your league's boundaries (if available):

Please Note: Little League has no affiliation with City-data.com

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

School enrollment information can be found online at City-data.com or by contacting your local school district office. This information is public and should be provided free of charge by the school district. If available, it is also helpful to break down school enrollment by gender. For information on private school enrollment, you will need to contact the office for the private school. Tracking year-to-year school enrollment trends will help your league identify opportunities for increased participation in the league.

	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016
Pre-K / Kindergarten			
Elementary School			
Middle School			
High School			
Private School			
Home School			
Special Education Enrollment			
Total Number			

CURRENT PARTICIPATION

If you do not have participation numbers for previous seasons, you may be able to obtain them from a prior player agent or Board member. You may also contact Little League International to see if your league submitted player registration data for prior seasons and/or obtain the number of teams chartered in previous seasons to estimate team numbers.

BASEBALL	2012	2013	% CHANGE	2014	% CHANGE	2015	% CHANGE
Players per division							
Tee Ball							
Minor League Machine Pitch/Coach Pitch							
Minor League							
Major/Little League Division							
Intermediate (50/70) Division							
Junior Division							
Senior Division							
Big League Division							
Challenger Division							
Total Number							

SOFTBALL	2012	2013	% CHANGE	2014	% CHANGE	2015	% CHANGE
Players per division							
Tee Ball							
Minor League Machine Pitch/Coach Pitch							
Minor League							
Major/Little League Division							
Junior Division							
Senior Division							
Big League Division							
Total Number							

COMPETING ORGANIZATIONS SUMMARY

Information on competing organizations may be obtained through their websites or by contacting the organization directly and requesting information. You may also want to consider other youth sports that operate during the same season.

COMPETITOR	Community-Based or Travel?	Baseball and/or Softball or other	Avg. Registration Price	Ages Offered	Approx. # of Participants
Example: East End Pony League	Community	Baseball	\$125	7-15	175

PARTICIPATION GROWTH/DECLINE

Briefly state how participation in your league compares to the trends of potential participants within your league’s boundaries. For example, has your league’s participation generally trended ahead of, in line with or behind changes in school enrollment and population in your area, how has your organization’s growth/decline compared to other youth organizations, etc.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Completing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis will assist your league in identifying areas where it is performing well, areas that need improvement and outside factors that may help or hurt the league in the future.

STRENGTHS

Examples include, but are not limited to: Little League® name recognition and reputation, low registration cost, great facilities, well-designed website, opportunities only available to participants in your league, access to the Little League International Tournament, anything that gives your league an advantage over competing organizations or other activities.

LIST YOUR LEAGUE’S STRENGTHS WHAT ATTRACTS AND INCREASES YOUR PARTICIPATION?

WEAKNESSES

Examples include, but are not limited to: high registration costs, high expenses necessary to operate the league, lack of volunteers, lack of facilities or facility constraints, short playing season, anything internal that puts your league at a disadvantage.

LIST YOUR LEAGUE'S WEAKNESSES WHAT AREAS CAN YOU IMPROVE UPON?

OPPORTUNITIES

Examples include, but are not limited to: expanding to offer new divisions of play or new programs (Softball/Challenger), improving the experience for players and volunteers, starting a Fall Ball program, providing more coach training, creating a social media presence, working with schools or other organizations to promote, developing relationships with various media outlets, etc.

LIST YOUR OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH WHERE CAN YOUR VOLUNTEERS MAKE A BIG IMPACT?

THREATS

Examples include, but are not limited to: competing organizations, population decline, economic challenges, other sports, changing demographics, anticipated new financial costs (e.g. facility usage fees), etc.

LIST YOUR LEAGUE'S THREATS WHAT OUTSIDE CIRCUMSTANCES HURT YOUR LEAGUE?

MARKETING STRATEGY

In this section, list marketing strategies and tactics that your league will implement to achieve your goals listed in the first part of this plan. Marketing strategies are big picture items to be completed to meet your league’s goals; marketing tactics are the practical steps that your league will take to achieve those strategies. An example is provided below, but this section should be customized and expanded to meet your league’s individual needs.

EXAMPLE - GOAL: INCREASE PARTICIPATION

<p>STRATEGY: NEW PLAYER RECRUITMENT</p> <hr/> <p>TACTIC: → Marketing to schools</p> <p>TACTIC: → Little League Tee Ball Program</p> <p>TACTIC: → New player referral program</p> <p>TACTIC: → Yard Signs</p> <p>TACTIC: → Print/online advertising campaign</p>	<p>STRATEGY: PROGRAM EXPANSION</p> <hr/> <p>TACTIC: → Expand by offering new divisions of play</p> <p>TACTIC: → Utilize combined teams to partner with a neighboring league to offer a new division</p> <p>TACTIC: → Advertising campaign to promote new offerings</p>	<p>STRATEGY: RETENTION OF EXISTING PLAYERS</p> <hr/> <p>TACTIC: → End of season evaluation</p> <p>TACTIC: → Offer early registration discount</p> <p>TACTIC: → Directed marketing to returning players</p>
--	---	---

WHAT GOALS DO YOU WANT TO COMPLETE THIS SEASON?

.....

GOAL 1: _____

STRATEGY: _____

→ Tactic: _____

→ Tactic: _____

→ Tactic: _____

STRATEGY: _____

→ Tactic: _____

→ Tactic: _____

→ Tactic: _____

GOAL 2: _____

STRATEGY: _____

→ Tactic: _____

→ Tactic: _____

→ Tactic: _____

STRATEGY: _____

→ Tactic: _____

→ Tactic: _____

→ Tactic: _____

IMPLEMENTATION

In this section describe who will be responsible for the implementation of the various marketing/operational strategies and tactics your league will employ as well as track the progress of each item.

STRATEGY/ TACTIC	INDIVIDUAL(S) RESPONSIBLE	ACTUAL STEPS/NOTES
Example: Implement a new player referral program	James Smith	Three ideas for referral programs will be presented at the next BOD meeting.

MILESTONES

In this section, list milestones that will be used to measure the success of your marketing efforts. Examples of milestones include, but are not limited to, the number of new players registered, the percentage of players that return for the following season, the number of players participating in a new division of play, etc. Milestones should be measurable and have a set time by which they should be achieved.

STRATEGY/ TACTIC	MILESTONE	TARGET DATE	STATUS
Example: Introduce the Junior Division	Register 24 players ages 13-14	1/31/2015	15 players registered to date

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT YOUR LOCAL LEAGUE

Members of the print, online, television, and radio media are always looking for a good story, and your local league activities will be of interest to the local media.

- A. FIND THE RIGHT OUTLET:** Your local newspaper is a great place to go, but don't overlook the importance of online media (Patch.com or similar local news site), radio stations, community newspapers, and television stations. Ask your volunteers and parents if any of them work for a local media outlet or know of someone who does. Knowing a contact is a great way to get your message seen and distributed.
- B. CONTACT THE RIGHT PERSON:** Reach out to a real person and not a general email. Find a sports editor or a local news/community editor, senior editors, managing editors, or reporters. For television and radio stations, look for news directors or sports directors. If you're still not sure who to reach out to, it never hurts to call the outlet directly and find the appropriate contact.
- C. CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE:** Media Alerts provide quick information on an upcoming event. They should always include Who, What, Where, and When. They should also include an interesting hook that makes media want to cover the event, and be sure to include anything from your community that is noteworthy. It is also smart to include information about any special dignitaries who may be part of your event.
- Press Releases are longer and written like a story. They should also have all the details that a Media Alert has, only with more information and a quote from your League President or an official with the league. Supplying a hi-resolution digital photo for the media to use is another way to help get coverage of your event.
- D. VISIT LITTLELEAGUETOOLKIT.ORG** for ready-to-use Media Alert and Press Release templates for your registration, opening ceremonies, end of year events, and more.
- E. TIME YOUR OUTREACH:** Send a media alert out two weeks before your event and re-send it two to three days before your event. Identify key media that you will reach out to directly the day before your event. Within a day after your event, send out a Press Release and a photo that shares the event's success.
- F. KEEP YOUR WEBSITE UPDATED:** Your website is not only a tool to keep players, parents, and volunteers informed, but also the media. Make sure that you are placing updates about your events on your website. If you have permission to use photos from those events, include them on your website.
- G. UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA:** Media will also use your social media pages to get information about your league. Make sure your background information and contact information is up-to-date, and that you're promoting your events on social media. New to Facebook and Twitter? Keep your posts simple, straightforward, and informative. Sharing a photo with your post is always a great idea to get more engagement.

Little League wants to know about your success promoting your league! If you get your local news to do a story about your events, or have your own photos, videos and stories to share, be sure to email them to media@littleleague.org

HOW TO HANDLE MEDIA REQUESTS

There may come a time when a concerning instance arises, and the local media will ask for information, for an interview, or for a quote. In a questionable scenario, it is best to politely decline the invitation to correspond with members of the press, and immediately contact your District Administrator and Regional Office. If the situation requires Little League International's involvement, a member of the media relations department will reach out directly or will work through the D.A. and Regional Office. **Please know, when necessary, Little League International's full-time staff will provide important assistance and guidance. Situations may include:**

- Excessively Poor Spectator Behavior → League Financial Questions → Volunteer Activity → Tournament Team Selection → Spectator or Player Injury

It is not recommended to send a league-wide email in an attempt to address a questionable situation without first communicating with your D.A. and Regional Office. Once a situation surfaces, it is advised to identify a person affiliated with your league who has experience in dealing with the media. It may be determined that this person serve as a local league spokesperson.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

FAQs

It is common for a Little League® to generate interest from the local media, as well as family and friends wanting to chronicle league games and activities using still photography or video. Here are a few questions and answers that a District Staff and local Board of Directors should be aware of; and may consider discussing as part of its policies.

Q: HOW CAN WE KEEP OUR CONSTITUENTS INFORMED ABOUT OUR LEAGUE ACTIVITIES VIA THE INTERNET?

A: All Little Leagues have access to a free website through eteamz powered by ACTIVE Network. This basic website gives each local Little League a unique domain on the Internet and provides an online portal to post a calendar of events, news and information (for example: rosters, game schedules and advisories). For an annual fee, the basic eteamz site can be upgraded to provide additional functionality. You are also encouraged to use social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Q: ARE STILL PICTURES ALLOWED TO BE POSTED ONLINE?

A: Yes. A local league can post pictures of league activities - including games - on its free eteamz.com website, through an independently-developed website that is accessed through the local league's eteamz website or on social media. Before taking any photos that involve children, parents must provide written consent. Little League has a general model release form that local leagues can use to gather this permission LittleLeague.org/ModelRelease.

Q: IS A PROFESSIONAL MEDIA/NEWS OUTLET (FOR EXAMPLE: NEWSPAPER, RADIO, TELEVISION) PERMITTED TO RECORD VIDEO OF A GAME, PRACTICE OR OTHER LEAGUE ACTIVITY?

A: Yes. Any news outlet may record video for use with a news story without prior authorization. It is the responsibility of the local league and/or tournament director to designate where the media may position a camera(s). Any interviews involving children must be conducted with an adult present (for example: parent, manager, coach or league official).

Q: CAN A PARENT OR OTHER NON-PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER OR VIDEOGRAPHER TAKE PICTURES OR PRODUCE VIDEO RECORDINGS DURING A REGULAR-SEASON OR TOURNAMENT GAME AND THEN SOLICIT SALES OF THE IMAGES OR FOOTAGE?

A: No person or commercial entity is permitted to photograph any league activities for the purpose of retail sale or distribution without the expressed written permission of the local league. In the case of video production, permission must be granted in writing by Little League International. If a league wishes to establish a contractual agreement with a professional photographer to sell team or action photography, it may do so. Public notice of such agreements is required prior to the photographer and/or videographer making any imagery available for purchase.

Q: WHAT RIGHTS DOES A LEAGUE OR DISTRICT HAVE TO CONTROL THE ACCESS TO NON-MEDIA AND/OR COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS AT A GAME SITE?

A: If the field facility is private property owned by the league or district, it is within the property owner's rights to restrict any and all access. If the field facility is located in a public or municipal park, it is the responsibility of the property owner to determine the access. If necessary, any local league official has the ability to review and explain the guidelines set forth by Little League International regarding the appearance of Little Leaguers in the media. This information is available on the Little League website at LittleLeague.org/Media.

Q: HOW CAN I STAY UPDATED ABOUT INFORMATION AND NEWS FROM LITTLE LEAGUE?

A: Visit LittleLeague.org regularly. Each month, Little League International produces a series of e-newsletters and e-mails that are delivered directly to your personal in-box. For local leagues - the **Little League Notebook** - is an e-newsletter produced specifically for league officials, and offers information about best practices, along with ideas and insight on how to effectively and efficiently operate your league. Little League also constantly connects, entertains and informs followers through its social media endeavors (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube).

To receive Little League's newsletters and e-mails, visit: LittleLeague.org/Register