

PROtect Integrity & Social Media

Introduction

This summary paper was produced from the Round Table discussions in Dublin as part of the Erasmus+ 2016 PROtect Integrity project.

Social media is an increasingly important communication tool for the Player Associations. It is ideally suited for providing players with short regular reminders about key messages. It is also generally a cheap way of reaching out to people. However, it is vitally important that Player Associations continue to engage with their players through regular face-to-face visits. Social media can complement regular team visits but cannot replace them.

Research

Social media covers a range of different platforms including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat and Instagram. It can be confusing to know which ones to concentrate on. The answer to this is to speak to your players. Only by doing research into which platforms they prefer will you know where to focus your efforts.

Internal and External Targets

Player Associations should identify particular groups (such as press, stakeholders, members and fans) who they want to be able to reach. It may be that different audiences respond best to different media. In general Twitter can be a good way of getting across political and corporate messages but may not be best for communicating with members.

Pick some core topics

It is good to plan communications over a period of time and develop a strategy. Player Associations will typically engage in activities including working conditions, wellbeing, dual career, match-fixing education etc. It is therefore important to show the range of work that you do in your communications. Use monitoring to see which topics gain the most impact and amend your communications accordingly. Try to get a mixture of fun and serious topics whilst always being aware of the association's key aims and objectives.



Help

Resources are always an issue for most Player Associations. Whilst there could be benefit in bringing in outside expertise to run social media (probably part-time or perhaps shared between different player associations) this is unlikely to be possible for many associations. It is more than possible for associations to run a decent social media presence yourself though you will probably need some specialist training (which is often available cheaply online). Other options to look at are to see if any players are interested in working in social media and might like the experience of volunteering to run the association's social media.

Tools

It is important to be active on whichever platforms you choose and it is possible to line up posts that can be scheduled in advance and delivered over the week. There are a number of different tools that can help monitor and deliver social media communications. Monitoring is important as you should evaluate the success of your communications strategy.

Conclusion

Social media can be a great bonus for Player Associations but it is important to do it properly. This will require dedicated resources and time. There are some excellent examples of Player Associations delivering important campaigns and education through social media which EU Athletes is happy to share with amongst its members.