



**FOOTBALL  
WEST**

# Marketing for Grassroots Clubs

**Timo Waldbuesser**

**Digital Media & Marketing Manager, Football West**

**CLUB DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE**

# What is marketing; *what is it not?*



- **Only a small part of marketing:**  
“We need more players. Please post something on Facebook.”
- **Marketing:**  
Why aren't local, young families joining this season?  
What do they need; what are they not getting from us?  
Are we visible enough and do they know our club?  
How can we make it easier to sign up?

# Who's looking after marketing & communications *at your club?*

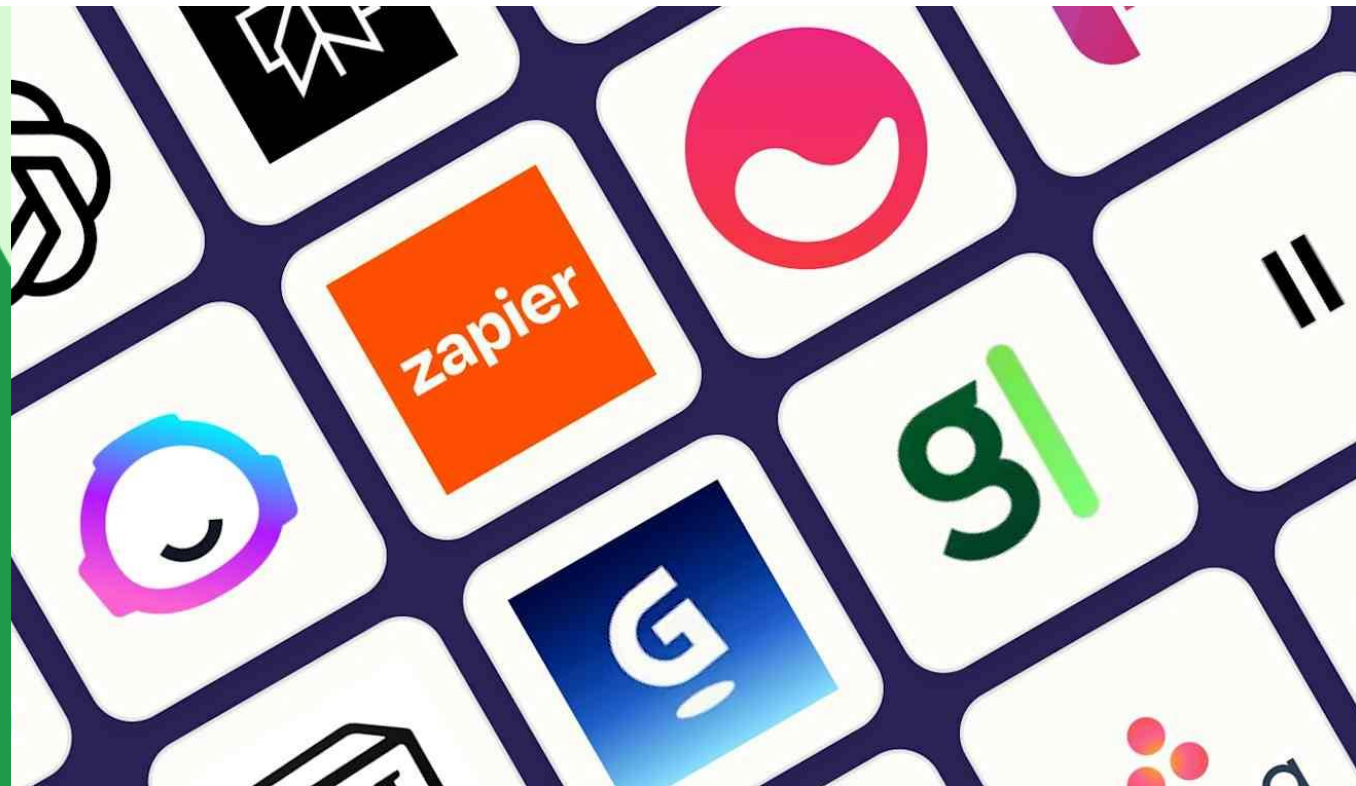


Consider appointing a marketing & communications coordinator (volunteer).

- Many young adults (already with the club?) want to gain experience and/or may be studying 'digital marketing', media & communications, etc.
- Training courses are available for free (e.g. YouTube) or at low cost (e.g. LinkedIn).
- And we are here to help (e.g. quarterly webinars)

# Challenges

- Marketing at grassroots clubs:
  - **Volunteers who are time-poor with competing priorities.**
- In addition to that, it's hard (and getting more difficult) to keep up with changes in media, marketing technology, consumer behaviour, etc.



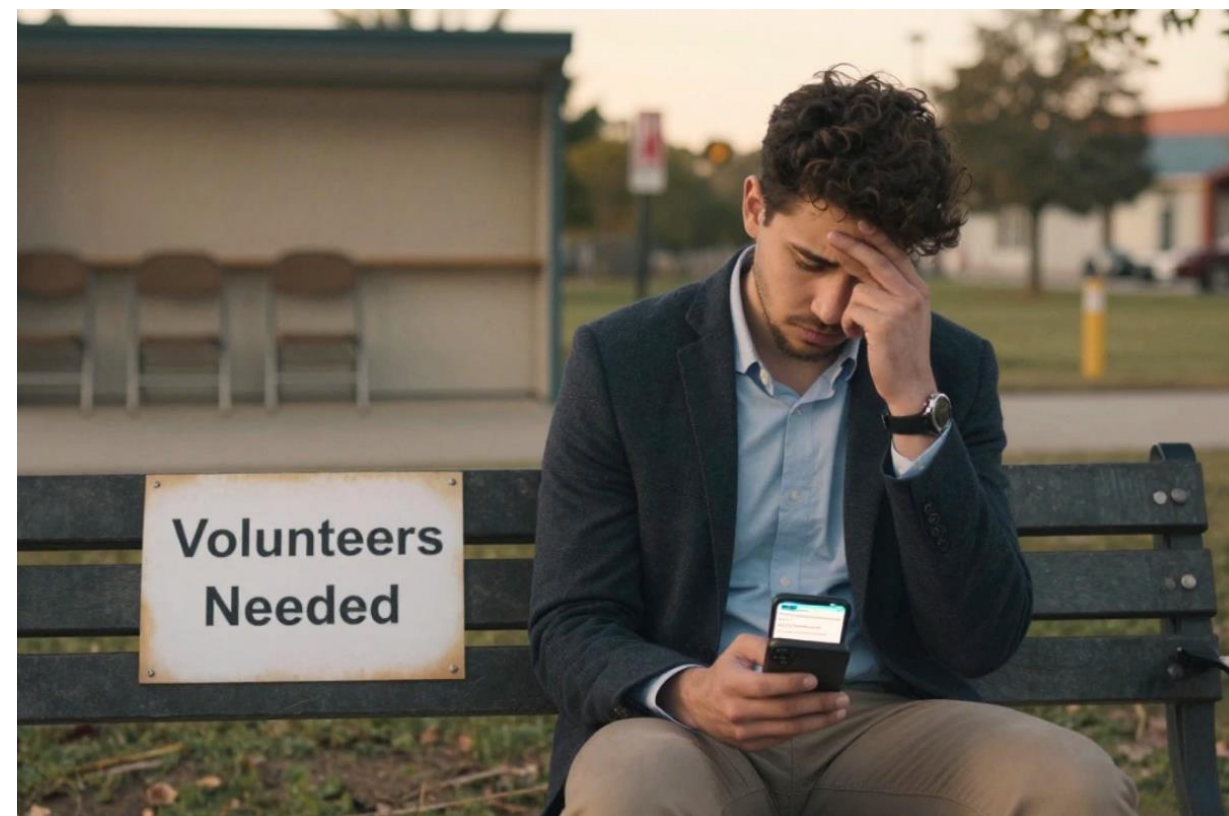
## What are AI tools?

AI tools are software programs that use artificial intelligence algorithms and machine learning techniques to automate tasks, analyze data, identify patterns, make predictions, and support decision-making, ranging from simple applications to advanced platforms.



# So what is the problem?

- Given these challenges, **many clubs go straight to marketing tactics**
  - It's easier – *we've done it before, and we think it worked okay*
  - It's quicker – *we simply don't have the time to do research or write a plan*

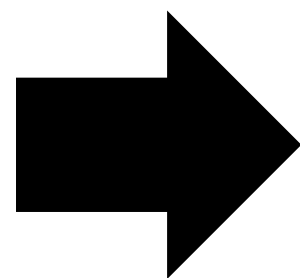
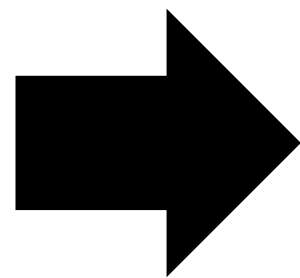


# The solution

For marketing to be most *effective*\*, we need to look at the '3 steps'

\*someone is spending some time on it anyway; you may as well make it as effective as possible

This is NOT about spending more time or money, or doing lots of training

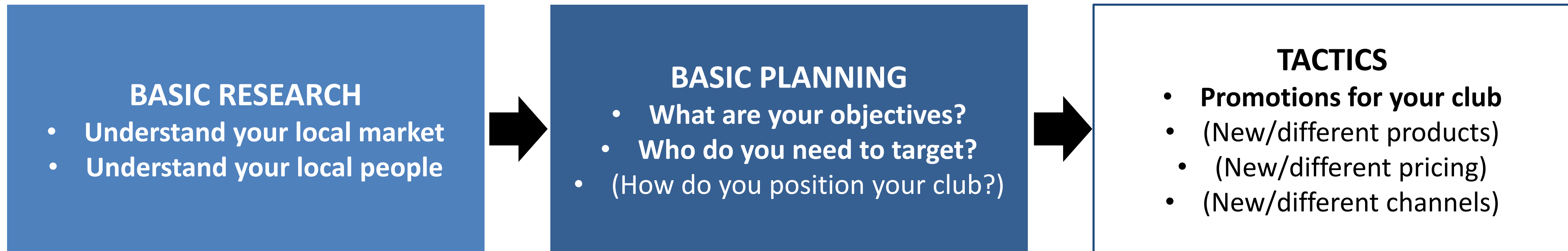


## TACTICS

- Promotions
- Products
- Pricing
- Place

# The solution *in 3 steps*

For marketing to be most effective, we need to follow the traditional process:



# “MARKETING WITHOUT BASIC RESEARCH AND PLANNING IS LIKE PLAYING FOOTBALL WITHOUT A COACH OR CAPTAIN”

**‘You are not the customer.**

Our opinions are irrelevant, and often dangerous, because we don’t always share the same mindset as the customers.

Great marketing isn’t about our perspective; it’s about understanding theirs.’



## BASIC RESEARCH

- Understand your local market
- Understand your local people

## BASIC PLANNING

- What are your objectives?
- Who do you need to target?

# Understanding your local market & audience



1. Why did you join?
2. What frustrates you?
3. What do you like about our club?
4. Any other comments or feedback?

Basic research is free AND easier than you think

- Patterns matter more than volume. After 10+ conversations, themes will emerge.
  - You're looking for direction, not essays
  - Look at what people *do*, which is often even more reliable than what they say

# Better understand *your* market & audiences

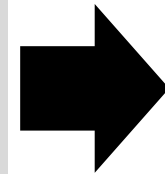
- 1) Talk to people (properly, not casually); parents, players, coaches,...
- 2) Turn coaches/team managers into “data collectors”
- 3) Look at your own data (highly valuable); i.e., registration trends, email open-rates or engagement on social media, and others
- 4) Competition audit (AFL, basketball, netball); how do they position themselves, what do they charge; why do people go there instead?
- 5) Exit feedback; questions: “What was the main reason you didn’t continue?”, “What could we have done better?”





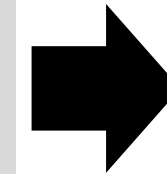
### **BASIC RESEARCH**

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### **BASIC PLANNING**

- **What are your objectives?**
- **Who do you need to target?**
- **(How do you position your club?)**



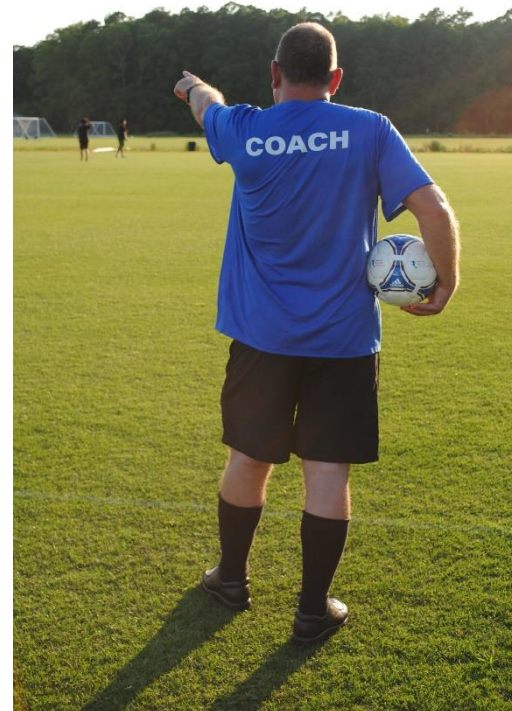
### **TACTICS**

- **Promotions for your club**
- **(New/different products)**
- **(New/different pricing)**
- **(New/different channels)**



# What are your objectives?

## Who do you need to target?

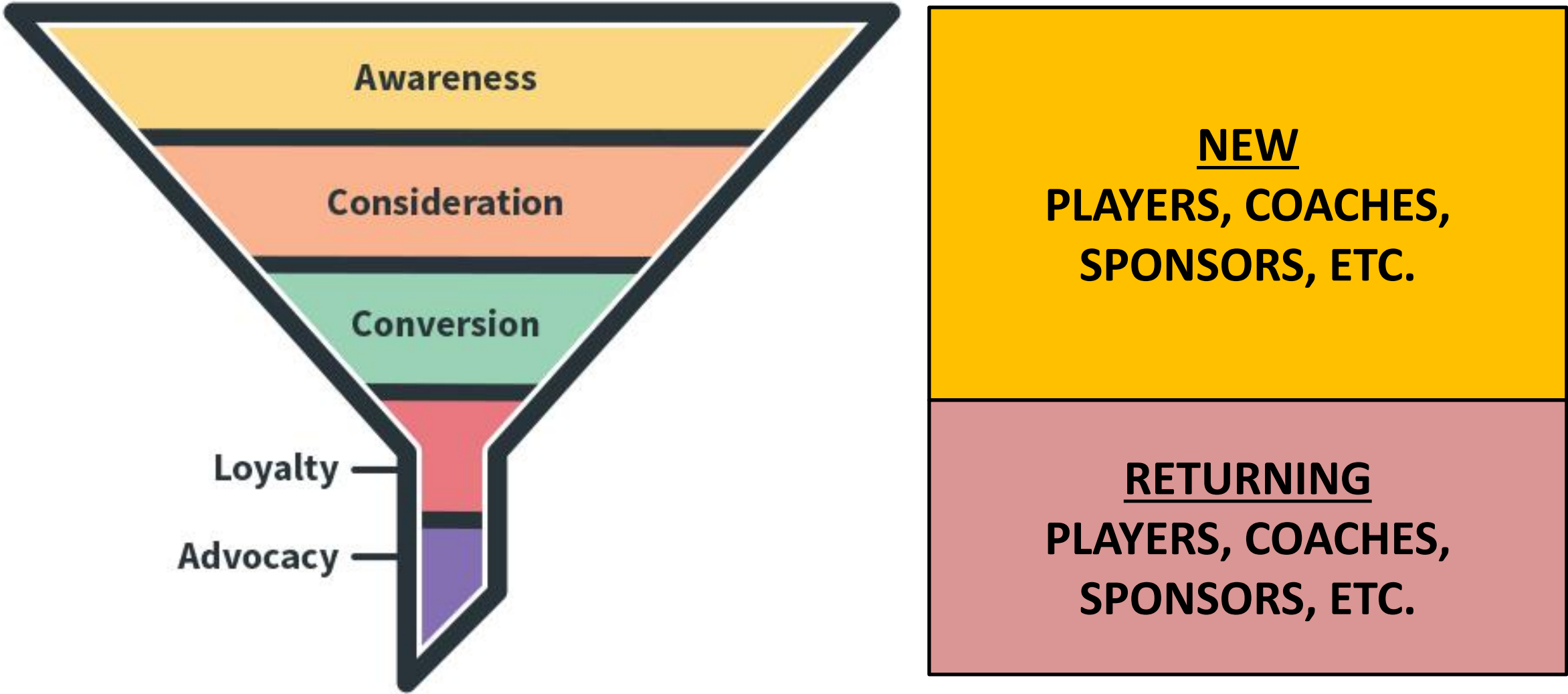


- Same sport
- Same suburb
- Often very different in terms of age, gender, and other demographics

- Be clear(er) on the club's objectives for marketing & communications
  - What is the priority? Awareness (new players), loyalty (returning), sponsors?
- To achieve your objectives, who do you need to target?
  - 'Everyone who likes soccer' is not a good target audience.

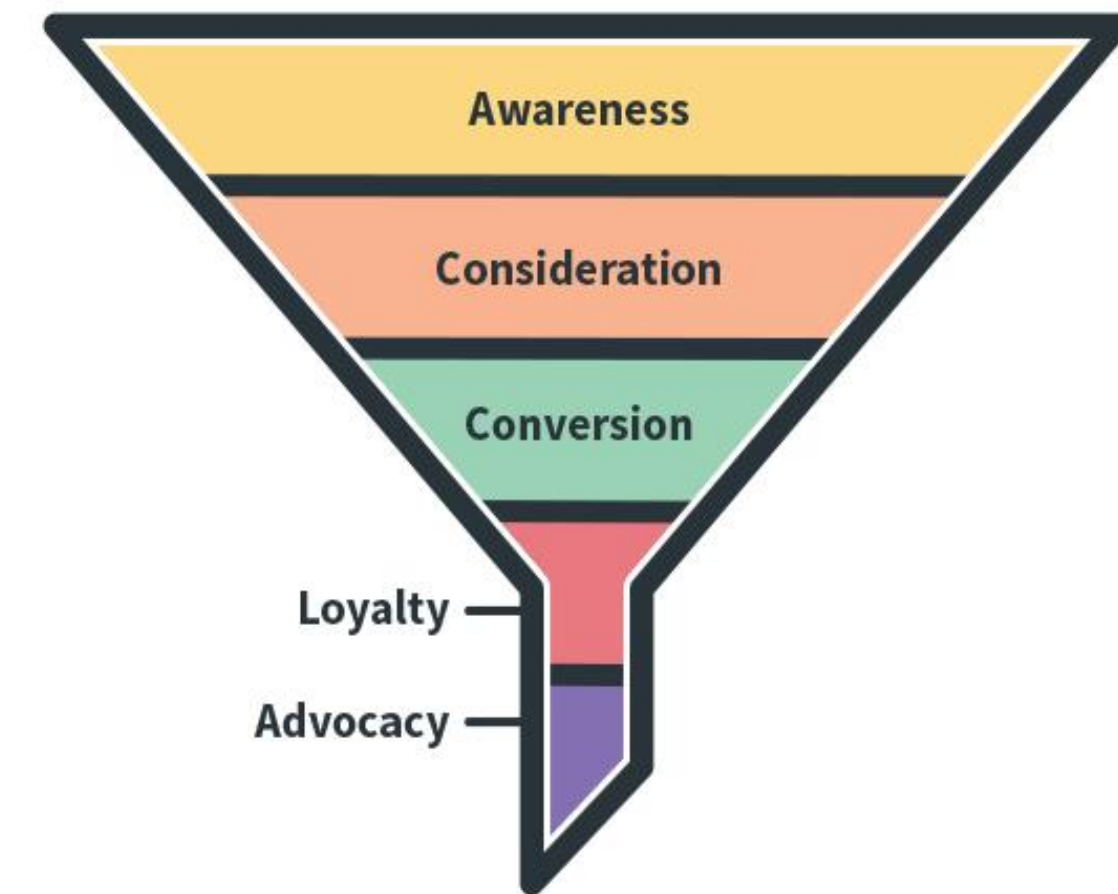
# What are the club's objectives for this year?

**WHO** needs to do **WHAT** for the club to achieve this?



# Let's work out *WHO* needs to do *WHAT*

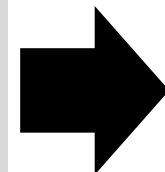
- **Do you need to target new players; or existing/returning ones?**
  - If you need to engage both, treat them differently.
- Which part of the “purchase funnel” is the focus?
  - **Awareness:** this is what we do; this is who and where we are
  - **Consideration:** video/photo content; benefits of getting involved
  - **Conversion:** we need XYZ; click her to join us (‘call to action’)
  - **Loyalty:** build a deeper connection with the club
  - **Advocacy:** turn members into fans who recommend you (WOM)





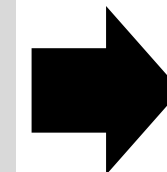
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### **TACTICS**

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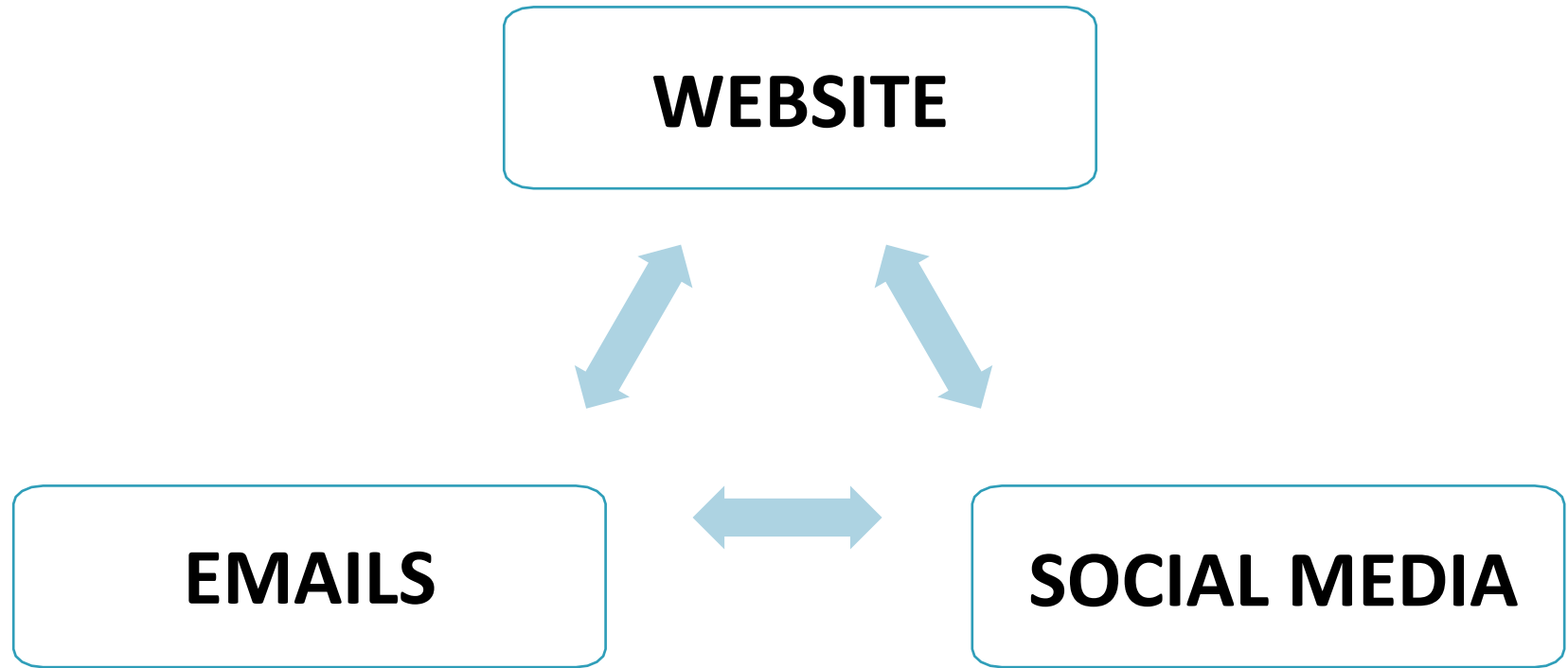


# Tactics & platforms: focus on SOLID BASICS

- There are *hundreds of possible channels, platforms, and formats* where you could spend your time and resources
  - Options are increasing, not decreasing; some information is confusing and misleading; it's tempting to follow the latest trends
  - (Un)fortunately, with limited time and resources, the clear recommendation is to focus on what is most effective →
- Your 3 channels for best success: **website, social media, emails**



# Great basics across 3 channels



# Great basics across 3 channels – *in detail*

- **WEBSITE:** your “shop front” – make sure navigation is simple, content is up-to-date, and the quality of your images and copy is as high as possible
- **EMAILS:** your “first party data” is *extremely* valuable; ensure your members have given permission to receive promotion communications from your club (called “opt-in”); this is very effective to drive loyalty and advocacy.
  - Also a key channel to raise interest in new sponsorship opportunities
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** focus on 1) Facebook (parents; players 30+), 2) Instagram (most people under 35), 3) LinkedIn for commercial partners
  - Focus on great basics, so you may only be able to manage 1) and 2); however, if you have lots of video content: YouTube can be powerful.



# Great basics across 3 channels – *more detail*

- **WEBSITE:** if your website is outdated and hard to manage internally; it might be worth investing here (perhaps via a sponsorship?) – often this pays itself
- **EMAILS:** make sure your data is stored safely so it cannot be shared externally by accident; if you don't have a EDM/CRM software, check out Mailer Lite, Mailchimp, or Brevo – these are no/low cost and easy to use
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** update your current bio/info (address, phone and email, website); create a weekly content calendar (e.g. weekend game photos on Mon/Tue; player/coach spotlight mid-week; fixture Friday; Sunday results)
- Organic reach is ~~dead~~ dying: investigate paid Ads (Meta Business Manager – for Facebook, Instagram, Messenger); small investment, big results



CONSISTENCY IS KING: CONSISTENT CONTENT QUALITY + MESSAGING + FREQUENCY

# KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. **HAVE A DEDICATED MARKETING RESOURCE (VOLUNTEER) – fill any knowledge gaps via credible, free online courses**
2. **DO SOME LOCAL RESEARCH – it's free & incredibly valuable**
3. **HAVE CLEAR OBJECTIVES – making marketing more effective**
4. **FOCUS ON SOLID BASICS (VS. NEW TRENDS) – website, social media, emails**
5. **CONSISTENCY IS KING: consistent content quality + messaging + frequency = builds your brand over time**
6. **REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT – Football West are here to help**

Thank you.

