



# Pillars for the management of sport organisations

Carlos Siffredi<sup>a</sup> & Fernando Vilches<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Friends Club, Argentina. <sup>b</sup>Argentine Tennis Association, Argentina.

## ABSTRACT

This article provides an overview of the main characteristics in the management of sports organisations through a set of tools framed in four pillars. Sport and sport institutions are undergoing profound change. In this context, it is increasingly evident that there is a need for qualified professionals in sport management, who have the challenge of absorbing the experience of previous processes in order to generate new proposals and improve the model.

**Key words:** sport management, innovation, knowledge management.

**Received:** 2 June 2022

**Accepted:** 4 July 2022

**Corresponding author:** Fernando Vilches Email: [fervilches@hotmail.com](mailto:fervilches@hotmail.com)

## INTRODUCTION

If we were to use the genetic code to interpret the culture of peoples, we could affirm that sport is an essential component of the collective DNA. Mankind finds in sport an inexhaustible source of pleasurable moments and treasures personal or generational stories that are evoked in any social event.

However, the evolution of sport as a cultural asset of high value to society is running ahead of the adoption of the necessary management systems to cope with the new demands of athletes and communities. Although reality has stimulated the adoption of useful tools to plan, organise, lead teams and evaluate their performance, there are still sport organisations that are at different stages of implementing such management tools.

In order to contribute to the evolution of the sector, we will summarise some recommendations for the management of sport organisations in general and tennis in particular. These recommendations are based on four pillars:

### PILLAR I: A TAILOR-MADE STRATEGY

Some sport institutions repeat patterns of behaviour that have been forged and sustained over time without any further argumentation than "habits and customs". This pattern of behaviour triggers a flow of actions that, to some extent, could be considered strategic (Mintzberg & Waters, 1982). However, the most convenient way to face the various situations of the daily management of sports clubs requires a higher degree of expertise than the uncritical reproduction of preset formulas.

Charles W. Hofer & Dan Schendel (1978) note that strategy functions as a mediating force between the organisation and its context. Such a coupling entails assuming a dynamic competitive position that facilitates the achievement of the main institutional objectives based on the design of an intelligent plan. With this instrument it will be possible to efficiently direct resources, acquire sustainability and anticipate changes in the environment.



Consequently, an organisation's strategic approach is far from generic formulas. It is a "tailor-made suit" developed on the basis of the organisation's own characteristics and context, within the limits set by institutional policies. The quality of the plan and its implementation determine its chances of success.

### PILLAR II: SATISFACTION OF TARGET GROUPS

The fate of tennis programmes is played out on a daily basis when members pick up their racquets, make their way to the club and decide to continue playing the sport. Such ratification becomes more acute when it comes to paying a fee or confirming participation in a new season. Ultimately, the permanence of the beneficiaries in the sports programmes is a determining aspect for the sustainability of the organisations.

In order to play this game, it is necessary to understand that attracting new tennis stakeholders comes at a higher cost than retaining existing ones. And such adherence is leveraged on their degree of satisfaction. The tipping point is our ability to identify the factors that achieve such complacency.

Howat et al. (1996) found that the attributes valued by recipients are associated with the quality of staff, infrastructure and sport-related services. Subsequent studies contributed new factors such as programme availability and delivery (Papadimitriou & Karteroliotis, 2000) or the beauty of the physical environment (Alexandris et al. ,2004).

We can affirm that these attributes have different impacts on the satisfaction of the target audience depending on the characteristics of the offer and its context. Consequently, it seems reasonable to investigate and get to know our target audiences thoroughly before designing strategies to increase their loyalty to tennis programmes.

**PILLAR III: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

Every sport process has an educational component; those institutions that can transform themselves into organisations that learn and teach to learn will be at the forefront of sport development (Mackey & Sedoff 2021).

To this end, it is crucial to take the decision to implement a continuous training model that addresses the entire training process and generates a culture of quality management.

Peter Senge (1990) states that the organisations that will become relevant in the future will be those that discover how to take advantage of the enthusiasm and learning capacity of the team at all organisational levels. Key to this is the development of a knowledge management system, through processes and procedures that allow individual experiences to be transformed into an institutional asset. To this end, the clubs should create spaces for debate, exchange of ideas and development of new documents.

This system requires a definition of priority objectives that guide the actions and are addressed to all stakeholders (Dietrich, Jürgen, Ostrowski and Rost 2004). In this sense, it is necessary to elaborate a pedagogical proposal that selects the set of relevant knowledge that athletes must appropriate throughout the development process. Then, this knowledge will be transferred to the field through appropriate teaching

**Table 1**  
*Pillars, Key Concepts and Practical Applications.*

Pillars	Key Concepts	Practical Applications
I. A Tailor-made Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement a strategy that functions as a mediating force between the organisation and its context.</li> <li>- Designing Smart Plans (resource efficiency, acquiring sustainability and anticipating changes in the environment)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To make a diagnosis of the internal and external reality of an organisation (Knowing the environment).</li> <li>- Formulate goals and objectives.</li> <li>- Design sports plans geared to these goals.</li> <li>- Regulate the process through monitoring and control of implementation.</li> </ul>
II. Satisfaction of the addressees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The permanence of the beneficiaries in the sports programmes is a determining aspect for the sustainability of the organisation.</li> <li>- The adherence of the addressees depends to a large extent on their satisfaction.</li> <li>- Identify the attributes valued by the target audience (e.g. quality of staff, infrastructure and lateral services of the sport, among others).</li> <li>- Evaluate the availability and delivery of programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carry out a diagnosis of the expectations and interests of the target audience.</li> <li>- Implement satisfaction surveys.</li> <li>- Design programmes to improve the quality of service.</li> </ul>
III. Knowledge Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Every sporting process has an educational component.</li> <li>- Harness the enthusiasm and learning capacity of the team at all levels of the organisation.</li> <li>- Transform individual experiences into an institutional asset.</li> <li>- Develop a knowledge management system.</li> <li>- Define priority objectives to guide actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design a continuous training programme.</li> <li>- Implement regular meetings and generate new spaces for debate.</li> <li>- Drafting of institutional documents.</li> </ul>
IV. Creativity, Innovation and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sport is nowadays a fundamental element for well-being and quality of life.</li> <li>- Generate innovative proposals that create value to meet current demands.</li> <li>- Generate new ideas and implement new tools (creativity and innovation).</li> <li>- The introduction of new technologies plays an important role in the development of sport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To design new programmes in line with current trends in sport.</li> <li>- Implement management platforms.</li> <li>- Application of data analytics.</li> <li>- Use technology as a tool for evaluation and measurement.</li> <li>- Use e-learning platforms.</li> </ul>

methodologies that promote meaningful learning in athletes. When we refer to knowledge management, we should not only think of technical managers, but also of parents, players and officials.

Incorporating knowledge, expanding information, generates greater opportunities for innovation, generates changes in people and consequently in tennis in general.

#### PILLAR IV: CREATIVITY, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Sport in modern society has become a fundamental element for well-being and quality of life, through recreational activities that can be enjoyed outdoors, individually or in groups. The sports business is an emerging sector at a global level. The practice of sport is growing, and with it, the consumption of associated services and products. There is a great opportunity for institutions in the sector to generate innovative proposals that create value for different audiences in order to meet current demands.

Creativity is the generation of new ideas or tools in any field of activity and innovation is the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organisation (Pere Solanellas, 2018). From this definition we can understand innovation as any change within the institution, based on knowledge that generates value.

The introduction of technology has also profoundly changed sport and plays a major role in its development. Different technological applications allow for more effective training, athlete management and monitoring, accuracy of results, improved spectator vision, performance development and injury prevention, among many other functions (Busch, 1998).

The world of sport is changing as a result of technological innovations. Institutions that intend to evolve in sport development must include them in their daily practice, taking into account improvement criteria agreed at different levels of management.

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

In order to make contributions not only from a theoretical perspective, we provide in table 1 a series of practical applications that allow us to translate each of the concepts developed above into concrete actions.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND FUNDING

The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest and that they did not receive any funding to conduct the research.

#### REFERENCES

- Alexandris, K., Zahariadis, P., Haralambos, T. & Grouios, G. (2004). An Empirical Investigation of the Relationships among Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Psychological Commitment in a Health Club Context. *European Sport Management Quarterly - European Sport Management Quarterly*, 4, 36-52. 10.1080/16184740408737466.
- Busch, A. (Ed.). (1998). *Diseño para el deporte: El culto al rendimiento*. Nueva York, NY: Princeton.
- Dietrich, M.; Jürgen, N.; Ostrowski, C.; Rost, K (2004). *Metodología general del entrenamiento infantil y juvenil*. Ed Paidotribo. Barcelona.
- Hofer, C. W., & Schendel, D. (1978). *Strategy formulation: Analytical concepts*. West Publ.
- Howat, G., Absher, J., Crilley, G. & Milne, I. (1996). Measuring customer service quality in sports and leisure centres, *Managing Leisure*, 1:2, 77-89, DOI: 10.1080/136067196376456.
- Mackey, M., & Sedoff, M. (2021). *Pedagogías para el alto desempeño deportivo*. Homo Sapiens Ediciones.
- Mintzberg, H., & Waters, J. A. (1982). Tracking strategy in an entrepreneurial firm. *Academy of management journal*, 25(3), 465-499.
- Papadimitriou, D., & Karteroliotis, K. (2000). The service quality expectations of private sport and fitness centers: A re-examination of the factor structure. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 9, 157-165.
- Senge, P. (1990). "La Quinta disciplina" *El arte y la práctica de la organización abierta al aprendizaje*. Ediciones Granica.
- Pere Solanellas, D. (2018). *Liderazgo en la gestión de entidades deportivas*. Editorial UOC, Barcelona.

Copyright © 2022 Carlos Siffredi & Fernando Vilches



This text is under a [Creative Commons BY 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

You are free to Share - copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format – and Adapt the content - remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially under the following terms:

Attribution: You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

[CC BY 4.0 license terms summary](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). [CC BY 4.0 license terms](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

#### RECOMMENDED ITF TENNIS ACADEMY CONTENT (CLICK BELOW)

