



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Market Segmentation for sport participation: *Children*



May 2013

Why does sport need to adapt to the changing attitudes and behaviours of Australians?

Sport and sport participation is a fundamental aspect of Australia's society, culture and economy. Australians, however, are becoming increasingly time-poor and with changing lifestyles and competing forms of entertainment, this is notably influencing Australian's attitudes and behaviours in relation to sport.

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) in consultation with sport sector partners has identified a need for research to be undertaken to better understand what is driving the Australian community to participate in sport and other types of physical activities.

In 2012, the ASC commissioned GfK Blue Moon to develop a needs-based consumer centric Market Segmentation model for Australian sport participants (players) and non-sports participants (non-players). The study sought to uncover, explore, identify and articulate the different motivations, attitudes, needs and barriers that influence people's decisions and behaviours in relation to sport and, in particular, participation in club-based sport.

The research developed two Market Segmentation models; one for Adults (aged 14 to 65 years) and one for Children (aged five to 13 years). Over the next 12 months, the ASC will be adding Australians with disability and volunteers in sport to the Market Segmentation Study, to explore and identify the specific needs, motivations and barriers to sports participation and sports volunteering for these groups. It is anticipated these findings will be available in late 2013.

The present report provides information relating to the Children's Market Segmentation model and articulates the motivations and barriers for Australian children in relation to sport and physical activity. Further background information about the Market Segmentation research study, as well as the findings on Adults, can be found at ausport.gov.au/marketsegmentation.

Market Segmentation for sport participation: Children

This Market Segmentation for sport participation: Children study (the Study) describes the segments among children aged five to 13 years, in terms of their attitudes to sport and physical activity, their attitudes to sports club membership, and their membership of sports clubs.

The Study identified six consumer segments among the Australian children's population (aged five to 13 years):

- > **current club member segments** — Social Loyalists, Sport Driven and Apathetic Clubbers
- > **non-club member segments** — Thrifty Enthusiasts, Ponderers and Sport Resistant.

Social Loyalists		'Sport clubs are the best! I love to be able to play sports and it with friends'
Sport Driven		'I like being part of a club to play sports but they sometimes want to do other stuff and that's annoying'
Apathetic Clubbers		'I don't mind playing sport with my club but i'm a bit over it'
Thrifty Enthusiasts	Potentials 	'Sport is great and so are clubs — i'd like to be part of a club again'
Ponderers		 'I'd like to do more sport but i don't really know how'
Sport Resistant	Non Potentials 	'I don't really like sport, people just want to win'

The Study provides key insights outlining how the sport sector can influence motivations and behaviours children have towards sport and physical activity. These include:

- > providing sport delivery that focuses on fun and enjoyment rather than competition
- > providing products and services that are inclusive; promote equal treatment; and focus on fun and participation regardless of skill level and ability
- > providing a variety of pricing packages and different types of membership that allow for flexibility of attendance and time commitment
- > identifying the potential for growth opportunities with regards to sport club membership by understanding the needs of different segments and the products they may be attracted to

The Segments

Each segment has its own set of challenges and opportunities. Among the club member segments, Social Loyalists and Sport Driven are highly engaged with clubs while Apathetic Clubbers are at risk of lapsing and will need to be re-engaged via less competitive products.

Among the non-club member segments, there are two that show the greatest potential for acquisition: Thrifty Enthusiasts who are typically lapsed users and Ponderers who tend to be younger and inexperienced with clubs. There is also a segment, the Sport Resistant, who are atypical of most children, generally disliking sport, in part due to sport's perceived competitiveness.

Segments of existing club members

Social Loyalists

Social Loyalists make up a quarter of the population aged five to 13 years. They are more likely to be male and from higher income households (over \$70k plus per annum). They are under-represented by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) individuals.

Social Loyalists are highly engaged with sport and love being part of a sports team. They enjoy all facets of sport, from the physical and mental to the social and competitive. Clubs are a big part of their lives and identities, and they enjoy all aspects of club participation (physical, social and self improvement). They are more likely than other club member segments to have joined for the sheer fun/enjoyment.



Other motivations for Social Loyalists to join a sport club are to exercise, advance their skills in a particular sport and/or to try a new sport. The decision to join is typically a joint decision with parents, many of whom are also club members. This is the core group of club members and the focus should be on retention or encouraging further involvement with other sport clubs. Clubs should provide opportunities for Social Loyalists to challenge themselves while having fun with other children.

This segment also includes social advocates, so clubs can consider referrals or 'bring a friend' opportunities. Although the cost of participating in club-based sport is less of a barrier for parents of this segment, membership options which make it easier for the whole family to join will help to ensure continued membership over time.

Sport Driven

The Sport Driven make up more than one in 10 Australians aged five to 13 years. They are more than likely to be found in metropolitan Australia and are over-represented by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) individuals (one in five are CALD).

The Sport Driven are highly engaged with sport and show a relatively high interest in doing more sport if they have information on how to go about it. While they aren't adverse to competition, for them it's more about the sense of achievement through meeting personal goals and self improvement.

Sport (in and out of the club) provides a strong sense of identity and means of self achievement for the Sport Driven. While they appreciate the camaraderie and the opportunity to get together with friends that clubs offer, it is the sport and self improvement rather than the social aspects of clubs that are paramount. Their membership with clubs is typically supported by their parents, three in 10 of whom are club members themselves.

Clubs should focus on retaining these individuals through offers that allow them to achieve their personal fitness goals through sport in an inclusive environment. Products and services should promote equal treatment and opportunities to participate in a variety of sport at all levels. Flexible membership pricing, family membership options and reducing pressure to be involved in the club beyond 'playing the sport' will encourage continued membership of this segment and their parents.



Apathetic Clubbers

Apathetic Clubbers make up one in six Australians aged five to 13 years. They are slightly more likely to be from higher income households (over \$70k per annum).

Despite their relatively active participation in sport (recreational and competitive), only a small minority consider sport to be a main hobby or interest, reflecting their apathetic attitudes to sport. This segment exhibits some negative perceptions of sport, suggesting poor experiences with sport over time. They are less likely to see the benefits to sport participation compared to other children and more likely to feel they don't like sport or that it is too competitive and no longer fun. They have joined clubs in the past for general enjoyment or fun, or to try a new sport rather than for sport skill advancement. However, it appears that pressures of the club may be eroding their positive attitudes to sport and clubs in general.

This segment would benefit from feeling less pressured to be good at the sport in order to continue enjoying it. There needs to be a focus on ease of 'entry' in terms of ensuring everyone feels they can join regardless of skill level or motivation. There may be a need to promote the social and fun aspects of clubs to reinvigorate this segment, who are at risk of dropping out if there is a change to their circumstances given their somewhat apathetic attitude.



Segments of non-club members with high potential for acquisition

Thrifty Enthusiasts

The Thrifty Enthusiasts make up around one in 20 Australians aged five to 13 years and are the smallest of the non-club member segments. They are very positive about physical activity and sport in terms of the physical, mental, social and self improvement benefits, and don't personally have any barriers to sport participation.

While they don't do physical activity with a club, most do organised physical activity through other organisations, school or courses. They are also participating frequently — five times a week on average. Similarly, parents of the Thrifty Enthusiasts are very positive towards clubs despite only one in 10 being current members.



This segment has high acquisition potential, with 80 per cent interested in future club membership (the same number have been members in the past). There are few perceptual barriers to joining a club, however cost of participating in club-based sport is a barrier.

To appeal to this segment, clubs should consider products that centre on making club-based sport more accessible through flexible membership pricing options, two-for-one memberships and providing value for money in terms of multiple sports. More flexibility with participation times is also appealing for parents. Children in this segment — as well as their parents — need to feel that clubs are inclusive and promote equality regardless of skill level.

Ponderers

Ponderers make up one in five Australian children aged five to 13 years. They are less likely to come from higher income households (mostly under \$70k per annum) and are over-represented by the cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD).

Ponderers are generally less active in sport than other children, and are less likely to do organised activities (three in five) however most do participate in physical activity for exercise or recreation. In general, Ponderers have relatively positive attitudes toward sport especially in terms of the fun and social elements of sport participation.



While Ponderers don't need to be convinced about the benefits of sport, they do have some reservations about clubs being too authoritative and competitive — in turn taking the fun out of sport. Their parents are less engaged in clubs and their perceptual barriers will need to be addressed as they are likely to perceive clubs to be inflexible and demanding of time beyond sport. Parents may also have concerns about the costs of participating in club-based sport.

Ponderers are a potential segment for acquisition as they show a high interest in sport involvement if they had information on how to go about it, as well as high interest in club membership (three in five).

For this segment, clubs will need to provide opportunities for fun and social participation without overt competitiveness. They must also address practical concerns about cost and commitment.

Segment of non-club members with low potential for acquisition

Sport Resistant

The Sport Resistant make up one in five Australian children. They are more likely to be female and from households with low-to-medium incomes (under \$70k per annum).

The Sport Resistant simply don't understand what other people get out of sports or physical activity and have little appreciation of the social benefits that other children usually value in sport. For them sport isn't fun and is too competitive.



They feel sports clubs are not for them and do not understand any benefits to joining a club. This stems from their dislike for sport and perception of clubs being too competitive and exclusive (that you 'have to' be good at sport).

Their attitudes are likely to be shaped by their parents, who demonstrate more negative perceptions. This is the most challenging segment to engage — in part because it would require a basic education campaign on the benefits of sports and physical activity to personal health and wellbeing to help shift these attitudes and behaviours. For this segment clubs should initially focus on delivery of non-competitive sporting opportunities such as beginner classes.

How can your sport use the Market Segmentation for sport participation: Children research information?

Australian children were generally more positive than Australian adults in their views of physical activity and sport, with adults ascribing fewer positive benefits to sport due to a perceived association with competition. The vast majority of children believed sport provides a multitude of benefits that include physical benefits, mental benefits, social benefits, and fun and enjoyment. To a lesser degree, competitive success was important to children.

Across all children's segments, the underlying motivation for participating in sport is to have fun and socialise. This is a key message to be emphasised in communications, in addition to ensuring that clubs actively maintain this aspect of participation across all age groups and grades.

The broader findings from the Study will enable the sport sector to take a look at their current product and service offerings for children and assess whether they are meeting the needs of the various consumer segments. Consideration should also be given as to whether modifications to existing or new product offerings would retain current or attract new consumer segments for children.

To further help sports' consider how it might deliver sport opportunities for children, the ASC has also released a new report from research it commissioned from Victoria University, the 'Validation of the *Playing for Life* (P4L) Philosophy'. The P4L report provides a validated and clearly articulated approach that sports may be able to adopt to better target those segments in the Australian children's population whose primary motivation to participate in sport is to have fun and play with friends. The P4L report can be accessed at ausport.gov.au.

For more information

A 'fast fact sheet' for each market segment identified for children aged five to 13 years can be found at ausport.gov.au/marketsegmentation.

To obtain a detailed profile for each children's segment and a copy of the full Market Segmentation Report for children contact:

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