

Understanding Sports Media Assignment 3

Executive Summary

This media strategy is unique because it leverages specific digital technologies such as social media platforms and influencer marketing to increase interaction with the Melbourne Hardcourt Bike Polo organisation. It was specifically developed to reach a varied audience and promote gender inclusion via a multiplatform media campaign. The 12-week program seeks to increase awareness of MHBP and develop an inclusive community of both new and seasoned players. The strategy's distinctive value proposition is based on accessibility, community building, and the sport's interactive and inclusive aspect.

1. Background

While still in its early stages, Melbourne Hardcourt Bike Polo is a unique and thrilling athletic activity in Australia that combines features of cycling and polo. Its distinctiveness and energy set it apart, and while its current appeal is limited to a dedicated following, it holds significant potential for growth and expansion. With Melbourne's dynamic athletic culture and diverse population, MHBP is well-positioned to expand its reach by emphasising the sport's inclusion and community component, which fosters a sense of belonging among its participants.

In the larger context of Australian sports, specialist sports such as bike polo confront media and participant support issues on several fronts. MHBP's media presence is restricted to low-level community-based projects and social media posts. However, this submission reflects a complete media strategy for the sport's expansion and development, supported by strategic planning and a clear vision for long-term capacity.

2. Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder participation is meaningful and crucial to the success of MHBP's media strategy. The table below lists the stakeholders engaged in this method, their roles, and their spheres of influence. Each stakeholder is not just a part of the plan but a critical element of the media plan's delivery and overall success.

Stakeholder	Classification	Objective	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency
Group Teams (existing players and teams)	Definitive	Support recruitment and promotion of the sport	High	High	High
Local Council	Dominant	Assist with local marketing and provide venue permits	Moderate	High	Moderate
Sponsor (Bike Repair Shop)	Dependent	Financial support and equipment repair services	Low	High	High

University Clubs	Latent	Promote to university students as a target demographic	Moderate	Low	High
Social Media Influencers	Latent	Promote sport via their channels to target demographic	High	Low	Moderate
Local Media (Newspapers, Radio)	Definitive	Assist in promoting the club through community media	Moderate	High	High

3. Media Plan

Objective: Increase MHBP membership by 20% in 12 weeks while targeting a representative sample of people and guaranteeing gender diversity in those targets.

Our media strategy is three-pronged: digital engagement, influencer marketing, and community outreach. Each part is intended to raise awareness of MHBP's efforts while stressing the sport's open and accessible nature, helping us boost MHBP membership by 20% in 12 weeks.

Instagram and TikTok are vital media channels for bike polo, as they employ visual material to highlight the sport's vibrant nature.

Collaboration with area radio stations and community newsletters to reach a larger audience.

- Specialised Facebook advertisements will reach bike aficionados and other targeted audiences.

Media Timeline

Date	Action	Stakeholder(s)	Objective	Milestones	Evaluation
Week 1 (Oct 25 – Oct 31)	Design and publish a social media campaign across Instagram and Facebook, showcasing player profiles, bike polo basics, and visuals from recent games.	General public, local cycling community	To increase preliminary awareness about Melbourne Harcourt Bike Polo and educate the public about the sport.	200 followers, 300 post engagements.	Check reach and engagement levels via social media analytics.
Week 2 (Nov 1 – Nov 7)	Begin posting posters and distributing flyers at local cycling shops, cafes, and sports venues, promoting	Local cycling shops, cafes, sports clubs	To engage sports enthusiasts and build community-	Posters in 15 venues, flyers handed to 100 people.	Track interest via event sign-up forms.

	the "Try Bike Polo" event.		level interest in the event.		
Week 3 (Nov 8 – Nov 14)	Host a "Try Bike Polo" event with free coaching and equipment for newcomers, promoted via social media and community partners.	Local residents, sports enthusiasts, cycling clubs	To attract new participants and provide an inclusive introduction to bike polo.	40 attendees, 10 new members.	Collect feedback via post-event surveys to measure inclusivity goals.
Week 4 (Nov 15 – Nov 21)	Contact local schools and universities to arrange demonstration days and mini-tournaments. Offer educational sessions for younger audiences.	Schools, universities, students	To engage younger demographics and foster long-term interest in bike polo.	Partnerships with 3 institutions, 50+ student participants.	Measure interest through student participation and feedback.
Week 5 (Nov 22 – Nov 28)	Reach out to local businesses for sponsorship opportunities, targeting cycling brands, cafes, and sporting goods stores.	Local businesses, potential sponsors	To secure financial and promotional support from local businesses.	Secure sponsorships with 2 local businesses.	Evaluate impact through social media cross-promotion and sponsorship value.
Week 6 (Nov 29 – Dec 5)	Pitch feature stories to local media outlets (e.g., community newspapers, online publications) and collaborate with influencers/athlete.	Local media, influencers, sports enthusiasts	To increase the club's visibility and raise its profile in the broader community.	2 media features, 1 influencer partnership.	Evaluate media coverage and influencer engagement to assess effectiveness.
Week 7-9 (Dec 6 – Dec 26)	Host a "Bike Polo Open Day" inviting participants from previous events and new members for friendly matches. Continue social media updates with	General public, club participants	To maintain momentum, strengthen community engagement, and encourage	50 attendees, 15 new members.	Conduct post-event surveys to evaluate participant satisfaction and community engagement.

	match highlights and player interviews.		new membership.		
Week 10-12 (Dec 27 – Jan 16)	Develop and distribute a monthly newsletter with updates on events, achievements, and community stories. Begin organizing a small tournament for the following quarter.	Club members, new participants, sponsors	To keep members informed and engaged, while planning future events to sustain interest.	100 newsletter subscribers, tournament date set for February.	Review newsletter metrics (open and click-through rates) and measure interest in tournament participation.

4. Target Audience and Challenges

MHBP's target audience is Melbourne-based young people aged 18 to 35, particularly those participating in cycling or alternative sports. The sport also tries to attract ethnically diverse participants by emphasising its inclusion. Our strategy is to balance the male-dominated involvement by emphasising gender-neutral engagement, providing equipment, and fostering a welcoming environment for players of all abilities. The emphasis on inclusion is intended to make everyone feel welcome and accepted within the MHBP community.

Challenges Recognised:

1. Lack of Awareness: Many potential participants must know the activity exists.
2. Gender imbalance: The existing demography leans towards male individuals.
3. Perceived difficulty: Beginners may find bike polo too physically demanding.

Strategic Response: Awareness initiatives on social media aim to reach the digitally connected younger generation.

We will advocate for improved gender presence across all media channels, from female athlete testimonials to live broadcasting of mixed events. Free open days with provided equipment can lower barriers to entry and help beginners better understand the activity.

5. Media Artefact

The media artifact is a wholly created full-colour booklet that emphasises the key features of Melbourne Hardcourt Bike Polo. The object will contain:

A QR code that leads straight to the MHBP website and social media outlets.

Visually appealing photos of varied players that emphasise inclusiveness.

Detailed membership information, including registration costs, equipment given, and training locations.

Physical displays at community events and cycling hotspots in Melbourne; digital distribution via multiple social media channels. The emphasis is on clarity, visual appeal, and welcoming tones that reflect the club's mission.

6. Aims and Methods

The primary goal of this media plan is to raise MHBP exposure and membership by at least 20% by the end of the 12-week campaign. To increase interest in the sport, we want to use Instagram and TikTok to provide material like game highlights and player interviews.

Collaborating with cycling influencers will help us reach out to existing fans.

- Community Involvement: Open days with equipment provide a welcoming environment for newcomers to get their first taste of bike polo.

7. Reflection on Methods

The campaign's online interaction and community efforts provide options for the youthful, tech-savvy customer and the more conventional offline market. *Bike polo* is a sport that attracts people from all walks of life thanks to a strategy that overcomes key participation barriers such as gender inclusion and accessibility.

Visual media guarantees that the joy and excitement of the sport are accurately communicated.

Using a professionally created booklet as the media artifact was deliberate: it provides both a tactile and digital imprint, ensuring the campaign's themes stay consistent and vast. This brochure, which features actual athletes and personal stories, supports the values of inclusiveness and accessibility while understandably portraying the sport to the audience.

Conclusion

The Melbourne Hardcourt Bike Polo communication strategy demonstrates our devotion to the sport's principles. It takes a multidimensional strategy to increase participation and awareness of the sport in Melbourne. It also works on issues like gender inclusion, community development, and access, among the club's primary obstacles to reaching consumers via digital channels. These strategic ties with local media, influencers, and sponsors, along with this vital media artifact, will help establish MHBP as a critical participant in Melbourne's alternative sports ecosystem, guaranteeing stakeholders that the strategy is being carried out.

Artefact



Who We Are

Background

Hardcourt bike polo is a cross between horse polo and ice hockey played on tennis court. Bike polo is a friendly but competitive semi-contact sport played regularly on Sundays and Tuesdays. Bring your bike, the rest is provided.

Values

Our sport is open to anyone who can ride a bike. Bike polo is proudly a mixed gender sport.

Goals

Our club is always looking to grow our diverse community of players, refs organisers and coaches. Melbourne Hardcourt Bike Polo aims to provide a fun, safe and competitive environment for all of our members.

Visit us

309-311 William St
West Melbourne VIC
3003
Australia

@melbournebikempolo
<https://www.melbournebikempolo.org/>



For & By Cycling Enthusiasts

Visit our website!



Become a part of our community



Equipment is on us!

We make it easy for you, providing bikes and polo sticks for all members participating in our competitions.



Never played before? Not a problem!

We run a variety of competitions based on your skill level. There are new player games, mixed level and hard hitter games for those looking to prove themselves on the court.



Join our community!

Scan the QR code to join our Facebook community of over 300 Melbourne based bike polo enthusiasts.

Why join us?

Staying fit

Bike Polo is great for your wellbeing, engaging your body and getting in your daily dose of sunshine.

Multiple locations

We run our tournaments at a variety of locations making it accessible for members throughout Melbourne. Locations are as follows:

- Neill Street Reserve, Carlton
- Albert Park
- Flagstaff Gardens, and many more.



It's affordable!

Become a member for the small price of \$150.



Hear from our Members

Testimonials from our community

"I had never heard of bike polo until a friend dragged me to a game, and now I'm hooked! It's an awesome mix of skill, strategy, and teamwork, and the community is super welcoming. Whether you're a complete beginner or a seasoned cyclist, there's always room to improve and have fun!" - Billy, 25.

"I joined Melbourne Hard Court Bike Polo just to try something new, and it quickly became my favorite hobby. The thrill of the game and the supportive atmosphere make every match exciting. Whether we're competing in a tournament or just playing for fun, it's always a blast!" - Lachie, 29.

"Bike polo has been a game-changer for me. It's a great way to stay active, meet new people, and challenge myself in a unique sport. The Melbourne crew is amazing - supportive, inclusive, and always up for a friendly competition. There's no better way to spend a weekend!" - Lisa, 32.

References:

Home: Melbourne Hardcourt Bike Polo Inc. (no date) *Melbourne Hardcourt*. Available at: <https://www.melbournebikepolo.org/> (Accessed: 24 October 2024).

(No date). Available at: <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/sports-activities/melbourne-bike-polo> (Accessed: 24 October 2024).

Sotiriadou, K. (Popi) (2009) *Sport in Society*, 12(7), pp. 842–860. doi: 10.1080/17430430903053067.

(No date). Available at: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rmit/reader.action?docID=1377481&ppg=188> (Accessed: 24 October 2024).

(No date). Available at: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2002254319?accountid=13552&sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals> (Accessed: 24 October 2024).