

Triathlon Queensland

www.triathlonqld.com.au

September 2002

Triathlon Queensland Inc was established in 1989 to administer the sport in the state of Queensland. The head office is situated in the Queensland Sport Building adjacent to Lang Park where one full time employee and two part timers are based. There is also a North Queensland Development Officer (part time) based in Townsville.

We spoke with Michael Sanderson in an office overlooking the site where the new stadium is rapidly rising from the large hole in the ground.

How would you describe the business you are in?

We are the governing body for the sport in the state, answerable to the national association and the Queensland Government.

Who are your customers?

All participants in the sport of Triathlon and its disciplines.

Do you have an established customer base?

Yes the members of the association, approximately 2,000 of them.

Are you trying to attract new customers?

Yes.

How will they benefit from your service?

Information (including magazines), insurance (public liability and personal) and a say in how the organisation is run and the direction it takes.

Who are your competitors?

We don't have any direct competitors, however some event directors see us as their competitor to their business.

How have you been successful?

By providing members with the service they require.

How do you use digital technology in your organisation?

We use mobiles to keep in touch when we are away from the office, though mostly using voice messages. In the office we have an NEC 'commander' style system. This has fast dial connection to our mobiles and other frequently dialled numbers.

We have 5 PC's of which 3 are on a network. There is no dedicated server. We use Microsoft Windows 98 and Office 2000, plus HandyCash. We also have a specially developed Access database that we use for our membership records.

Are you connected to the Internet?

Yes, we currently have a 56K dial up modem. We have considered broadband but cannot afford it at the moment.

Do you use e-mail?

Yes, we use it constantly, like the phone. We use it to communicate with each other, with our members, with our business partners.

Do you have a regular e-mail newsletter?

No, our membership vetoed the idea. They wanted a hard copy newsletter. We do however send out updates.

Case study courtesy of Digital Business Insights Pty Ltd

case study

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Do you use instant messaging?

No

Do you do your banking on-line?

No, we still operate two signature accounts.

Have you ever had problems with viruses?

Yes, worm viruses.

What measures do you take?

We used to use PCillan but it was not protecting us. We now use Norton's Antivirus.

How often do you back up your files?

Every two weeks to CD.

Any other equipment?

Yes, we have a fax machine and a scanner. I also own a digital camera that I sometimes use for association business. The security system is the responsibility of the State Government who own the building.

Do you have a Web site?

Yes, the address is www.triathlonqld.com.au

Do you have or are you connected to an Intranet?

No.

Do you use an Extranet?

Yes, with the Sport & Recreation section of the Queensland Government site. We are responsible for keeping our part up to date. There is also a link to our site from theirs.

What is your Web site for?

To provide information about the Triathlon Queensland and to promote membership.

Is it a development of your existing business or a new venture?

It's both.

If it is a development, how is it supposed to help?

It is there to answer questions about the association, our policies and activities, and to provide the opportunity for people to register for membership. It also has links to a number of other sites.

Who is your on-line audience?

We don't really know, only hope and assume and target potential customers.

Do you host internally or externally?

Externally, in Townsville.

Do you make/allow transactions on your site?

Yes, there is a secured section.

Do you collect information with forms/surveys?

Yes, with membership forms.

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How do you manage/update the content of the site?

We do it ourselves, we have password-protected access.

How do you promote the site?

It is listed on all printed materials, in the magazine and with links from other sites. These could be sponsors sites, event sites, government sites, etc.

How much does it cost to promote your site?

There is no set budget.

Do you ask customers how to improve your site?

There is an on-line feedback facility, but we do not get much response.

What was the impact of transaction processing on your site?

There was no major impact when we introduced the membership registration facility. It accounts for about 10% of our registrations.

How much do you pay per transaction?

Just the standard EFTPOS merchant fees.

Do you have an existing customer database?

Yes, held in our specially developed Access software package.

Does your Web site capture new customer information?

Only if they register for membership.

Are your customers concerned about security or card fraud?

Yes.

How do you deal with this concern?

We give people the option of downloading the membership forms so they can mail them to us.

Does your site have a privacy policy?

Yes, it is posted on the site.

What is the best way to get people to come to your site?

Through advertising. Our members already know about it either from the printed material or by word of mouth.

What is the best way to get people to return to your site?

Make it current, constantly update it.

What is the best way to get people to buy products and services?

Keep it simple!

How does your site generate revenue?

Only through memberships.

How many versions/upgrades of the site have there been?

The current one is our third major facelift.

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Did you write a business plan before you started?

No, we had discussed it a lot, and then we received a proposal from one of our current members.

How much time did it take you to get up and running?

About 3 weeks.

Where did you go for advice?

We relied on the member knowing what he was doing.

How did you know whom to trust?

We used our own experience to assess, including our solicitor.

Did you do the work yourself or use outside contractors?

It was an unpaid, outside contractor.

Were you happy with the work and help given?

Yes.

How much did it cost you?

Nothing.

What mistakes did you make that you wish you hadn't?

On our first two versions we tried to provide too much information. This version keeps it simple, with links to the complex stuff.

What were the main risks you took?

The only risk we took was that we had to find the time to keep it up to date.

What advice would you give someone else?

Make sure you have the facility and resource to keep it up to date yourself. Using an outside contractor is expensive.

What were the barriers within to your digital project?

The only barrier was finding the time. There were no cultural barriers.

Did everyone in your organisation support the enterprise?

Yes.

How did you overcome opposition/concern?

This was not an issue.

Do you know what technology is used by your organisation?

Yes, I have a basic understanding.

Do you understand what it does?

I understand what we currently have does, but I am not up to date with all the latest developments.

Where can people find useful advice about the subject?

Find someone who can talk in plain, simple language with out being lost in computer jargon.

How did you decide which technology to use?

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We choose on the basis of price, future requirements and life expectancy. We don't need to be at the cutting edge, we would prefer reliability and cost savings.

Are the key managers in your organisation up to speed with digital technology?
Generally speaking, yes.

What were the business benefits you were hoping for?

One of the things we are looking for is increased sponsorship dollars, one way we can do that is to give sponsors exposure on the Web site. We already have one deal like that.

Are any of these benefits quantifiable?

They will be, in terms of sponsorship dollars and/or product.

Are customers happy with what you have done for them?

We have only had one complaint, about the colour we used!

Are staff happy with what you have done?

Yes.

What is the most important thing you have learned in the last year?

Technology is not just a useful tool, it is now a tool of necessity. It does however have its down side. You have to have support resources. I am also increasingly aware of the pitfalls of e-mail communication.

Given what you know now, would you do it again?

Yes.

What are you planning to do next?

Nothing, just make the best use of what we have at this point in time to consolidate our base of operations. We have constant financial constraints and we always have to justify additional expenditure.