

Model High School Athletic Marketing Plan

Josh Youngman

Beacon Academy, like many schools in the Indonesia, has a small marketing team dedicated to recruiting students in a highly competitive market. Many competitors rely on their brand name and/or test results to recruit and retain students—Beacon has neither. As a newer school that just finished its first year of major examinations (IGCSE), marketing of the school has been limited to philosophy and facilities. Fortunately, some very creative individuals head the school and the facilities are some of the best in the area.

The school is aesthetically pleasing and has great facilities, but athletics is poorly marketed. Part of that stems from the poor performance in athletics, but this is primarily due to a very small student body, a high staff turnover, and the use of internal teachers (who lack professional coaching experience) as coaches. The other and most important reason for a poorly marketed athletics program is the lack of creativity in marketing. Indonesian schools and their marketing “experts” stick with a series of preordained marketing techniques: open houses, a quarterly newsletter, major events (Founder’s Day, etc.), and the like. There is a lack of ingenuity and desire to promote athletics (or the school, in general) creatively and effectively.

The dynamic of Asian schools is still predominantly academically based, but there is a growing trend to incorporate sports in the students’ school lives. Like many trends, the understanding that sports could teach students transferable skills or help them develop traits valued beyond university was late coming to Asia. However,

Josh Youngman is the athletic director at Beacon Academy, Jakarta, Indonesia. Please send author correspondence to youngman.joshua@gmail.com

this poses a great opportunity for Beacon Academy to get ahead of the curve and woo prospective students from other competitors.

Creating the Marketing Plan

In forming a marketing plan, the Beacon Academy Athletic Department first had to lay out objectives to use as a guideline. After talking to the board director, the athletic director laid out the following objectives:

- generate a website for Beacon’s athletic conference to be used by Beacon and participating schools,
- develop and standardize the awarding of an athletic scholarship from Beacon, and
- create a plan of action for photographing, marketing, and writing up athletic events.

The latter highly depends on the students’ interest in taking photographs and creating weekly write-ups as part of their requirements for their IB (International Baccalaureate) Diploma or Duke of Edinburgh International Award (DofE). Many of these marketing tools could be student led, with the athletic director and the marketing department overseeing these activities.

Customizing the athletic scholarships was a time-consuming process, not because of the difficulty of setting up a structure, but because of the precedent that the board had laid out prior. Because of the size of the school, the board wanted to push the scholarship program to fill seats (understandably so). Beacon Academy had just opened its Senior School and needed to fill its freshman and junior class, respectively. However, the fish market–style of haggling for the percentage of tuition covered by a scholarship does not aid in implementing this system effectively. The parent community is small and thoroughly interconnected, so offering a lower percentage to a student athlete with similar skills and qualities of a student athlete who received a higher percentage prior to these matrices would be an uphill battle.

Figure 1 shows the school profile (brochure format). One challenge was creating a matrix that flowed with the existing profile, that could be easily understood, and that was aesthetically pleasing. With school colors being a violet and orange away from a rainbow, the matrix needed to have flair yet not throw off the flow of the rest of

the profile. Figures 2 and 3 show the newly created Middle School (Grades 6–8) and Senior School (Grades 9–12) scholarship matrices. The school had previously used percentages for tuition awarded and, for the sake of consistency, athletics created an award program with levels of percentages in increments of 10%.

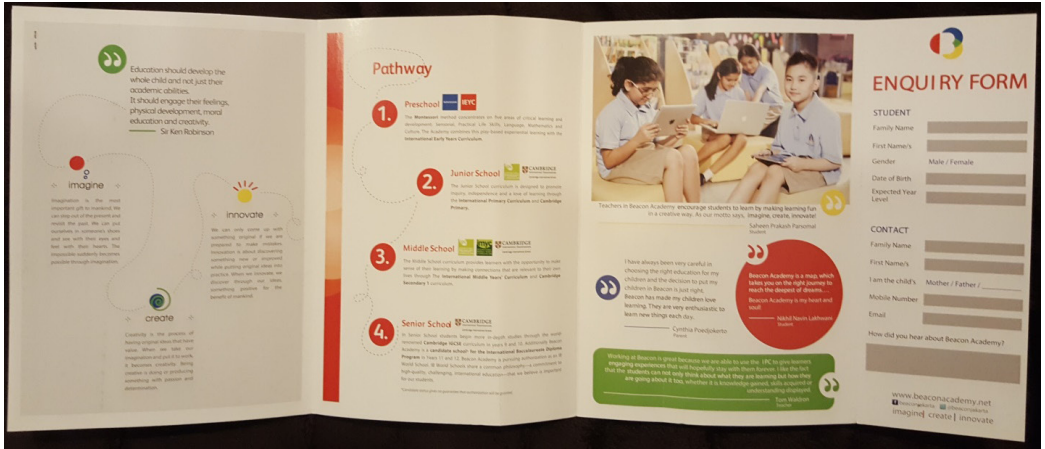


Figure 1. Marketing brochure.

The sticking point is the amount awarded to new students at the upper levels of MS or SS. Initially, an incoming Grade 8 could only earn 40%. What if they were very talented? What if they were athletically *and* academically gifted? What if they were the son or daughter of a teaching applicant? Central administration wanted to maintain a grey area in which to negotiate in those rare circumstances. It took multiple cups of tea before the administration and the board reached an understanding that implementing a set matrix would improve the status and/or pedigree of the school. Which product gives you more confidence: one with a standardized fixed rate for all or one you have to haggle for?

Middle School Athletics Scholarships

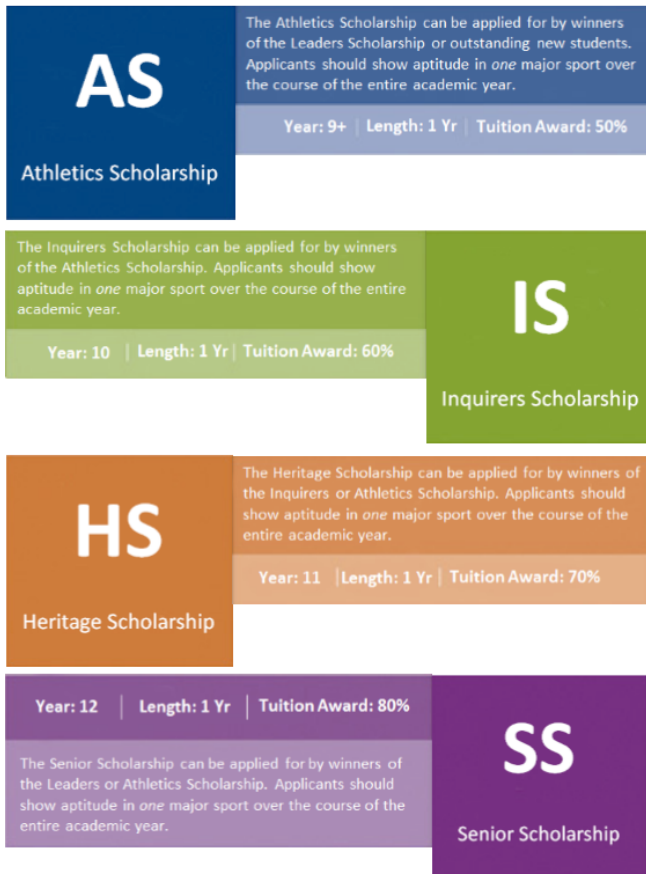


Applicants for any of the scholarships above must apply to the school or be enrolled in the school prior. Note that the percentage of tuition awarded is a maximum amount of is subject to the evaluation of the Athletic Director, Head of School and coach(es).



Figure 2. Middle School athletic scholarship matrix.

Senior School Athletic Scholarships



Applicants for any of the scholarships above must apply to the school or be enrolled in the school prior. Note that any incoming student (regardless of year), can only be eligible for the Athletics Scholarship. However, they are able to apply for their year-appropriate scholarship the following year.



Figure 3. Senior School athletic scholarship matrix.

Creating a website was straightforward, but the committee had to agree on a platform that all of the committee members (the tech savvy and otherwise) could easily edit, and a Google Site was the best option available. This site includes standings, scores, a weekly review, a slideshow of photos, directions to participating schools, a Google Calendar of events, and a rolling feed of the school's Twitter account. The athletic director implemented the latter after reading an article entitled "5 Ways Your High School Athletic Department Should Be Using Twitter" (Taylor, 2015). The concept of live updates is a wonderful idea, but it calls for a larger commitment by the committee members. Because most of the members are also coaches, they cannot be asked to continually update Twitter during the games in which they coach. Therefore, other committee members (who were not coaching that day) need to be present for the sole purpose of updating the Twitter feed.

Implementing the Marketing Plan

The Google Site (<https://sites.google.com/site/northjakartaathletics/>) was constructed and rolled out to all participating schools, parents, and players prior to the first sports season (soccer). The construction and updating of the website was easy enough, but creating parent and student dependency on the website and not on the athletic director or committee members was more difficult. It needs to be noted that these are small schools; small schools in which conference committee members are also teachers and/or coaches to many, if not all, of the students. These committee members have been the point of contact for any and all inquiries from parents or students regarding the calendar, league news, and so forth. It was decided to advertise the Google Site and Twitter on the schedule itself (see Figure 4), which was the first of many ways used to push people toward new online platforms.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Beacon Academy (Beacon)
 Singapore School Kelapa Gading (SIS)
 Global Sevilla Pulo Mas (GSPM)
 North Jakarta Intercultural School (NJIS)
 Sekolah Lentera Kasih Sunter (SLK)
 Jakarta Taipei School (JTS)

GIRLS' EVENTS

Beacon vs SIS U15/GSPM vs SIS U18	Sep 19
GSPM vs SIS U15	Oct 3
Beacon vs SIS U18	Oct 10
Beacon vs GSPM/SIS U15 vs SIS U18	Oct 24
GSPM vs SIS U15/Beacon vs SIS U18	Oct 31
SIS U15 vs SIS U18/Beacon vs GSPM	Nov 7
Beacon vs SIS U15/GSPM vs SIS U18	Nov 14

UNDER-10 EVENTS

Beacon vs SIS @GSPM	Sep 20
NJIS vs SLK @ NJIS	Sep 21
Beacon vs GSPM @ GSPM	Sep 27
NJIS vs GSPM/SIS vs SLK @ NJIS	Oct 5
NJIS vs SIS @ NJIS	Oct 12
Beacon vs SLK @ GSPM	Oct 18
Beacon vs NJIS/SIS vs GSPM @ NJIS	Oct 19
Beacon vs GSPM @ GSPM	Oct 25
Beacon vs SIS @ GSPM	Nov 1
GSPM vs SLK/NJIS vs SIS @ NJIS	Nov 2
Beacon vs NJIS @ GSPM	Nov 8
GSPM vs NJIS/SIS vs SLK @ NJIS	Nov 9
Beacon vs SLK @ GSPM	Nov 15
SLK vs NJIS/GSPM vs SIS @ NJIS	Nov 16
GSPM vs SLK @ NJIS	Nov 23

BOYS' EVENTS

GSPM vs SLK/Beacon vs SIS (U12)	20 Sep
Beacon vs SLK/SIS vs GSPM (U14)	22 Sep
Beacon vs SIS/GSPM vs NJIS (U18)	23 Sept
GSPM vs JTS (U18)	30 Sep
SLK vs SIS (U12)	4 Oct
Beacon vs SLK (U12)	11 Oct
Beacon vs GSPM/SIS vs SLK (U14)	13 Oct
JTS vs Beacon/SIS vs NJIS (U18)	14 Oct
Beacon vs SLK (U14)	20 Oct
JTS vs NJIS/Beacon vs GSPM (U18)	21 Oct
Beacon vs SIS/GSPM vs SLK (U14)	27 Oct
Beacon vs SIS/JTS vs GSPM (U18)	28 Oct
Beacon vs SLK/GSPM vs SIS (U12)	1 Nov
SIS vs GSPM (U14)	3 Nov
Beacon vs NJIS/JTS vs SIS (U18)	4 Nov
Beacon vs SIS/SLK vs GSPM (U12)	8 Nov
NJIS vs JTS (U18)	9 Nov*
Beacon vs GSPM/SIS vs SLK (U14)	10 Nov
SIS vs GSPM/Beacon vs JTS (U18)	11 Nov
Beacon vs GSPM/SLK vs SIS (U12)	15 Nov
SIS vs Beacon/GSPM vs SLK (U14)	17 Nov
Beacon vs GSPM/NJIS vs SIS (U18)	18 Nov
GSPM vs SIS (U12)	22 Nov
NJIS vs GSPM (U18)	25 Nov
Beacon vs GSPM (U12)	29 Nov
SIS vs JTS (U18)	30 Nov*
Beacon vs NJIS/SIS vs GSPM (U18)	2 Dec

Notes

- All U14 and U18 games are held at Beacon and all U12 and Girls' games at SIS
- Kickoff times are as follows:
 - U14 and U18 – 15:30
 - U12 and Girls' – 15:30
 - U10 (both locations) – 15:00
- The two teams listed first will play the first game with the next two teams playing immediately after
- The conference tournament for U12 and Girls' will be held at SIS
- The conference tournament for U14 and U18 will be held at Beacon
- Both conference tournaments will be open to other schools with the conclusion of both tournaments ending in an awards ceremony at Beacon on the day of the tournaments
- Note that Wednesday, November 9th and November 30th will be make-up games for U18 Boys'

KEY DATES and TERM BREAKS

Conference Football Tournament @ SIS (U12/Girls')	3 Dec
Conference Football Tournament @ Beacon (U14/U18)	3 Dec

Beacon: Sep 26 – Oct 9
 NJIS: Oct 24 – 30
 SIS: Sep 26 – 2 Oct
 Oct 17 – 23
 GSPM: Oct 10 – 16
 SLK: Sep 26 – 2 Oct
 JTS: Nov 24-28



Follow us on Twitter
 @NJAConference



Find updated tables, scores and directions to participating schools at our new Google site:
<https://sites.google.com/site/northjakartaathletics/>

September 2016

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

12 Sep: Idul Adha

October 2016

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

2 Oct: Islamic New Year
 30 Oct: Divali Day

November 2016

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

December 2016

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

12 Dec: Maulid Nabi
 25/26 Dec: Joint Holiday



Figure 4. Football schedule advertising the website.

The scholarship matrix was rolled out at the beginning of October, prior to the first Open House for prospective students. Although applications will not begin until January for the next academic year, it is important for the school to have a hard copy of information for prospective parents to compare with information from other schools. Private education is a highly competitive market in Jakarta and having quality materials in hand could make the difference in parents and prospective students choosing Beacon Academy or the school down the road. Although the information was tied into the school's brochure, central administration thought it would be easy to incorporate it into the school's website. Over the next 2 months, the athletic director worked with the Marketing Department to determine where and in what format to include the matrices on the website.

Luckily, requirements for the IB and DofE programs produced photographers to maintain the school's rolling photo album on the Google site. However, although Beacon Academy boasts some of the better facilities and receives constant reaffirmation from administration that Marketing will support the Athletic Department, the Marketing Department has done little to aid the Athletic Department in marketing athletics to businesses and current or prospective parents. The athletic director continues to handle weekly write-ups and the task of reaching out to prospective sponsors.

Assessment and Evaluation

Although rolling out the scholarship matrix will have minimal effect in the short term, the associated documents and the decisions put in place, along with the creation of the scholarship structure, will greatly increase the efficiency of the process. Beacon's online admissions portal, Open Apply, now includes a section for prospective students to apply for an athletic scholarship. Prospective students will download, complete, and upload to the system the newly created scholarship application form (Figure 5), along with specific measurables related to their sport (i.e., recorded times for swimmers, scores for golfers, etc.). This is *only* after the student applies to the school itself.

Athletics Scholarship Application Form
This form is to be completed with both the student-athlete and their parent/guardian's signature.

Legal Name of Candidate: _____
 Preferred Name of Candidate: _____
 Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Sex: Male
 (mm/dd/yyyy) Female
 Nationality: _____ Transgender

Height: _____ Weight: _____
 Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____

Current School: _____
 Address: _____

Name of Head Teacher: _____
 Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____

Candidate wishes to be considered for the following sports:

- First Preference: _____
- Second Preference: _____

Please list relevant sports teams the candidate has played for at their school (give dates and positions played).

Figure 5. Scholarship application form.

The strong push toward the Google Site has paid off tremendously, with the site receiving heavy traffic throughout the week. The site is not mobile-friendly, but the school's use of a Twitter account for game updates has proved effective with 25+ followers and those numbers rising each week. Though one sponsor pulled out at the last minute, the Sponsorship tab on the website is now left open as a marketing tool to attract prospective sponsors.

The lack of aid from the Marketing Department was unsurprising, but having students help with photography and the uploading of

new photos to the school's Google Site is a good first step in what will eventually be a student-led website. With this activity, students could easily fulfill requirements for their IB Diploma or DofE, so the first domino falling should lead to more involved students in the future.

Conclusion

Making a strong push to market athletics benefits the school greatly, but it also keeps the school accountable. It is easy to come up with ideas and resources for promotion, but the steps that follow are equally important: giving the athletes enough practice time, having proper equipment, and hiring quality coaches. Creation of the marketing plan has already been completed, but implementation will wait until the athletic director and board director understand the steps that need to be taken *parallel* to the marketing plan. This project will greatly benefit the school, but student athletes should also reap the benefits that come with a more heavily emphasized athletics program. With this in mind, the athletic director secured new equipment for the sports teams, arguing that there is no point in marketing a program that does not have proper equipment to support its current team.

The matrices are an aesthetically pleasing tool to be used by Marketing, but the benefits of such a tool are few because this structure is expected to be readily available already. Though the creation of the matrices is a necessary step in creating and implementing athletic scholarships, it is a step that the school should have taken prior to offering *any* scholarship. The same could be said for the scholarship application. Any school offering these types of scholarships has similar forms, and the Beacon Academy board director proved as much by pulling examples of other schools' forms during a meeting. This reiterated the necessity for such documents, but it begs the question why it took so long for the school to create them in the first place.

The outcomes of this marketing plan, at the least, should be the continual formalization of the athletics conference and aid in the recruitment of sponsors. A multiyear plan has yet to be established for the athletics conference, but there is a tentative understanding of what the Athletic Department would like to do over the next academic year and possible changes for the following academic year. All of these changes are geared toward enhancing online platforms, pro-

viding a competitive environment, and recruiting sponsors to cover costs associated with the school's seasonal sports (referees, medals/banners, etc.).

Reference

Taylor, S. (2015, November 23). 5 ways your athletic department should be using Twitter. Retrieved from <http://schools.hometeammarketing.com/2015/11/23/5-ways-your-high-school-athletic-department-should-be-using-twitter/>