

Good Practice Guide

An insight guide on... a great club experience



Background / Intro

Many clubs assume the best way to attract more people is to spend more time and money on marketing. Without understanding the needs and wants of your members, the money spent on telling everyone how great your club is will be lost. Your members are your customers and if you don't provide a positive customer experience, they won't keep coming back.

An unhappy customer will tell between 10-20 people about their experience, whereas a happy customer contributes 14 times more revenue. If someone has a great experience they are more likely to keep coming back and become the best campaigners for your club to attract new members. Delivering a positive experience should be at the heart of everything we do to support a sustainable infrastructure of clubs and leagues, and secure the future of table tennis.



Customer Experience

The customer experience describes the interaction with a business, its products or services. It is a person's perception of how they are treated at each point of contact. This experience could be affiliating to your club, the coaching someone receives, or attending specific sessions e.g. 50+

Great experiences are usually summarised as effortless, stress-free and put the customer first. Experiences that put people first will make your club or league stand out.

Who are your customers?

Everyone who interacts with your club or league is a customer. At your club, this might be:

- Players
- Volunteers
- Coaches
- Schools and teachers
- Parents
- Leisure or facility operator

The Headlines / Impact

- People will move on to another club or league if they don't enjoy their experience
- People tend to buy a service because of the product, but leave because of poor customer service
- Research suggests 67% of customers mention a bad experience as a reason for leaving

This guide is for those clubs wanting to enhance the experience they offer. It will help you to:

- Consider the experiences your members are having
- Consider ways to improve those experiences for your members
- Learn from others for how you could create a great experience

Customer Journey

The customer journey refers to the steps people go through to engage with your club, from initial enquiry through to first visit follow up. By understanding each of the touchpoints you can identify where the experience might be improved to make it better, easier and more efficient for your members.

A great first experience for someone means they are more likely to return and potentially become a member in the future. Keeping your existing members happy means they are more likely to be loyal and stay with your club for longer, or return if life changes cause them stop playing for a short time. Happy, loyal members mean you improve the sustainability of your club, and your members are more likely to tell others about the great time they have when they come along.

Consider the steps below for someone coming to your club for the first time. How would they feel, what would they be thinking? What it's like to be a member at your club?



1. Looking for
table tennis



2. How to find
out more



3. Getting
there



4. First
impressions



5. Session
Experience



6. Follow Up



1. Looking for Table Tennis

Consider the journey someone will go through to find your club in the first place—how would someone find out about your club? Does your club have a website or use social media? Think about places people regularly visit where you might be able to promote your club, such as schools, doctors surgeries, community boards, local advertising (papers, post office), or local community groups.

Now they know your club exists how will someone know which session is right for them? Is equipment provided, is there a dress code? How much do sessions cost? Is the information on the website up to date?

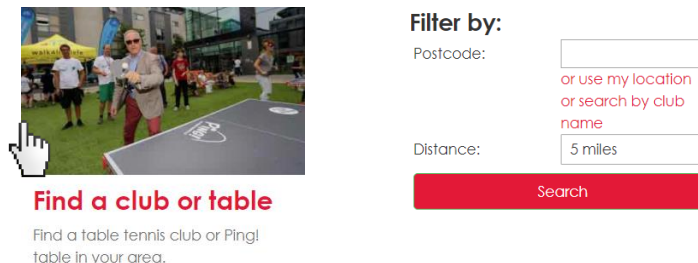
You may want to include photos of the key people at the club on the website so newcomers know who to look for when they arrive at the club for the first time. Photos of each session will help newcomers see for themselves whether the session looks right for them. Try to keep photos of sessions up

to date, i.e. within the last 12 months if possible.

Tip: ask a friend or family member to test how user-friendly your website is

What TTE & partners can do to help people find your club:

- Clubs that hold a valid affiliation with Table Tennis England (free or as a Premier Club) can appear on our table finder tool: <https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/compete/where-to-play/table-finder/>



Find a club or table

Find a table tennis club or Ping! table in your area.

Filter by:

Postcode:

or use my location
or search by club
name

Distance:

Search

- Many County Sport Partnerships offer 'Activity Finders' to promote local activity. You can find your local CSP by visiting the CSP Network website: <https://www.cspnetwork.org/your-csp>



2. How to find out more

Whilst some people will be happy to just turn up and play at a session after finding your club, others will want further information to shape their decision whether to attend.



What to consider:

- **Who?** Are the contact details provided up to date and for the most appropriate person? For instance, do you have separate contacts for junior and adult sessions? Some clubs provide photos of key members so newcomers know who to look for when they attend for the first time.
- **Customer service.** This could be someone's first experience of table tennis and could be a turning point as to whether someone decides to come to your club or not. Are the people responding to queries friendly and willing to help? Were they able to provide answers to key questions or signpost people to further information? If you say you are going to get back to someone, do you do so? How long does it typically take to respond to a query?
- **How?** What's the best way for someone to get in touch or find out more e.g. email, phone, website, FAQs, Facebook. If your club has a preferred method of contact be open and honest in telling people.



3. Getting there

Going somewhere new can be daunting for many. Providing as much relevant information as possible will help put new visitors at ease.

Accessibility. Consider the ways someone will get to your club -if there is parking at your club specify whether it is free or pay and display. Does the venue postcode work for satnavs? Make it easy for people to find by communicating the nearest bus stop, tube station or other public transport service.

Signage. When people arrive try to make the club obvious to find. Portable swing signs are cost effective (starting from £39) and also make your club look professional – these signs are particularly good if you do not own your venue. If the club is part of a large facility consider further signage once someone gets inside the building.

Inclusivity. Women may be more aware for their safety, such as the club and

surrounding area being well lit. The same can be said for young people if they come to the club on their own. Is there anything your club could do to ensure it feels welcoming and safe?

PremierClub's have access to free disability awareness training – if your club has completed this, be proud to tell people. Not accessed this offer yet? Find out more here: <https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/clubs/club-s-guidance/premierclub-ability/>





4. First Impressions

Clubs can be intimidating places when arriving to an already established group. Making newcomers feel welcome should be everyone's responsibility, including existing players.

When someone arrives, ensure newcomers receive a positive greeting on arrival and are not left hovering awkwardly at the door. Creating a culture where everyone is encouraged to greet a new face will support a positive first impression and will help put new people at ease.

Tip: No matter what age newcomers should be buddied up with an existing member while they settle in. A buddy could help them to meet other players, signpost them to key people in the club and be a friendly face to direct initial questions and queries to. Their buddy doesn't have to be someone who has all the answers, but should be friendly and know enough to direct them to the best person who can help.

Tip: Talk to parents of children from the sessions to make them feel confident their child will be looked after while in your care. Is there something you can offer to parents if they are waiting e.g. parent session?

Tip: Simple things like talking to newcomers to understand what they want to get out of their table tennis experience will help you signpost people to your clubs most suitable offers.

Basic information recommended to capture on someone's first visit:

- First & last name
- Contact details – if they decide not to come along again, try to find out why. Use it as a research opportunity to learn from. If they do decide to come again, you will need this information for health and safety purposes.
- Why do they want to play table tennis, what are they hoping to get from their experience



5. Session Experience

It is important someone's experience of sport and physical activity is a positive one, and they are left feeling inspired to achieve their individual needs and aspirations. Great coaches should provide engaging, rewarding experiences that develop health, confidence, pride and new skills.



Ensure your coaches are confident to cope with a range of playing standards so sessions can be adapted and inclusive for everyone. Coaches should be able to distinguish between those that want to play socially from those who are more ambitious.

Table Tennis England offer a range of CPD (Continuing Personal Development)

opportunities to support the upskilling and learning of our coaches. For more information see our Useful Links on page 16.

Tip: Simple things like remembering names will make newcomers feel part of the group and club. Coaches, volunteers and other players being friendly can make a big difference - encourage people in the club to be a role model for the qualities you would like to see in your club. Rewarding good behaviour as well as performance, particularly for primary age participants will help develop a positive club culture.

Tip: The final activity will be the most memorable part of the experience someone will take home. Finishing the session on a high such as a game or an activity that provides individuals with a sense of achievement.

6. Follow Up

Don't be afraid to ask people how they found the session and learn to be open to feedback. Taking the time to understand someone's experience means you can signpost them to other opportunities.

One particular session might not have been right for them but you can help them find other sessions more suited to their needs and wants. If the club can be flexible so members can move easily from one group to another this may help people fit table tennis into their busy lifestyles, and again, keep someone in the sport.

Tip: Remind all players (and parents) at the end of the night when the next session will be – suggest adding your session in their diary, as it helps participants to plan and commit to attending.



Try and find time to talk to parents after the session; they will be key influencers on whether their child returns and could be volunteers in the future.

Tip: Consider how your club can continue to get feedback from members to provide an ongoing great experience. A start of season survey, mid-season email, end of season forum are all great examples of how to hear from club members. Agree as a club 2 - 3 things to focus on for the year to improve the club experience.

Leading by Example: Woodlands TTC, West Sussex

Woodlands TTC consider the experience from the perspective of a newcomer, considering how they would feel at each point of interaction.

Many players first attend the club as a result of viewing the clubs' website. The website has clear information about what sessions are available, when they are, and the different ways to get in touch for further information.

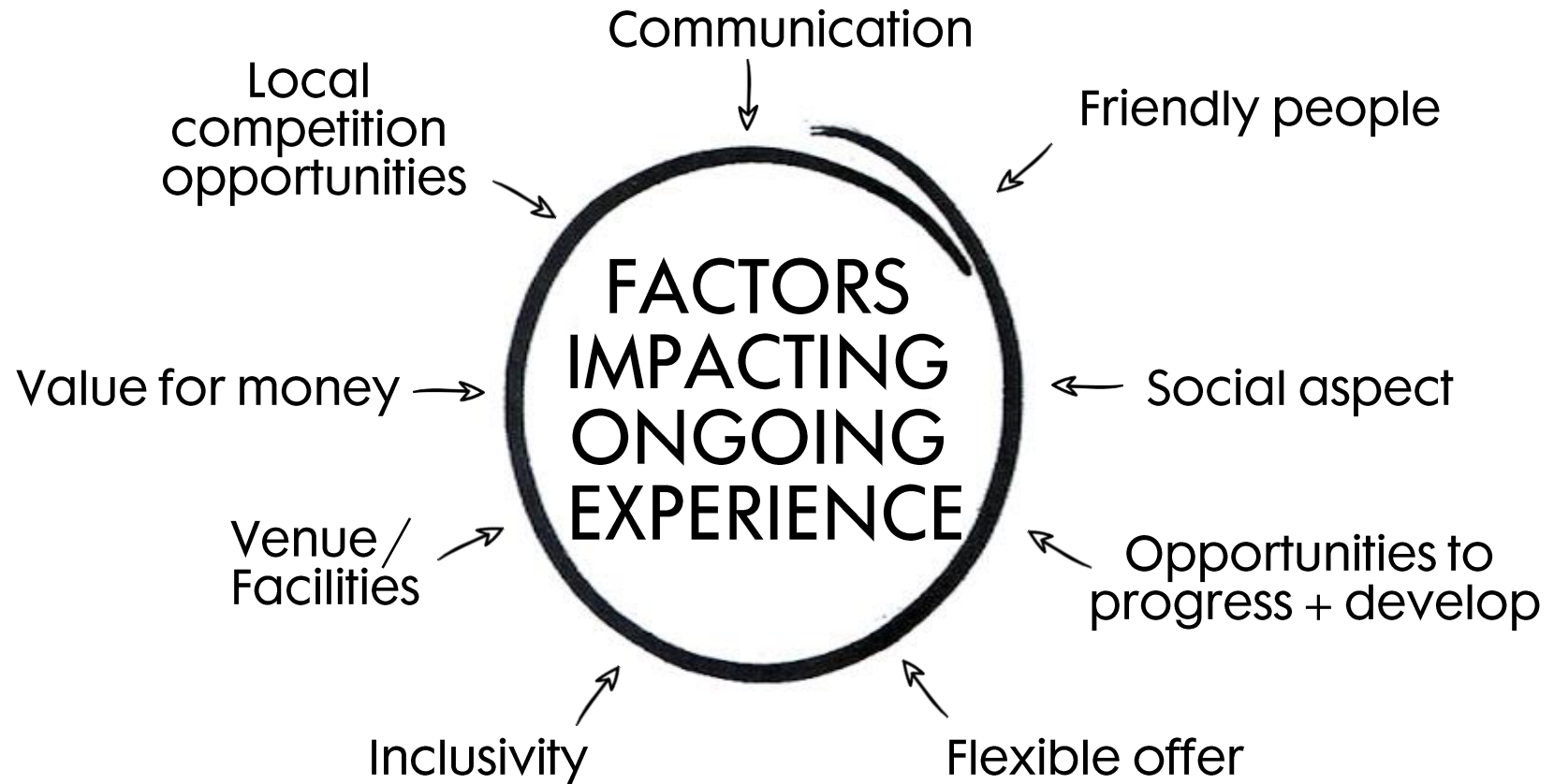
1st Visit. A newcomer is welcomed by one of three people, which means it does not become one person's responsibility. The name is taken and they are introduced to other players around the club. Newcomers initially come to social sessions for non-league players, where doubles is played on 4 tables. Individuals rotate through partners after each game so there is plenty of table tennis and opportunity to meet lots of people.

2nd Visit. Contact details such as address, phone number and email are recorded so the club can keep in touch about what's going on in the club, e.g. details for playing in the league, social events and insurance. If they do not want to play in the league they are welcome to continue at the club as a social member.

Throughout the year, 8 internal club competitions are held, one of those exclusively for social members as a round robin. Players get lots of games and there is a presentation of trophies at the end.

Social members are occasionally offered a 6-week coaching course, staff permitting, some of whom will play in the league as a result.

For an ongoing great experience all members are invited to social events such as pub skittles, ten pin bowling, croquet, rambling, annual golf days, and annual dinners. Social members are as much a part of the table tennis family as any other club member.



How many of these do your club do? Can your club improve in any of these areas?

Focus on: Flexible Offer Fusion TTC

Fusion TTC is local community club that provides a fun and welcoming environment for all ages, abilities and backgrounds. The club has tailored its' offers to accommodate the needs of its members by developing coaching sessions to suit different standards and different age groups.

There are open sessions for new and experienced players, where players rotate regularly so everyone gets to play different people and it means there's no need to come with a partner.

For those that are wanting to develop further, the club runs training camps during the school holidays open to both juniors and adults. Additionally, once a year a group of players have the opportunity to attend a training camp overseas.

“ We're really a family rather than a club ”

FUSION TTC

Adult Coaching

Fusion TTC were predominantly an adult club with a number of individuals that hadn't played before enquiring about developing further. Fusion TTC recognised table tennis as a sport for all, and now offer a range of adult coaching sessions available for different standards: beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

Key Points

- The session needs to accommodate all abilities, Fusion TTC engage inactive people, attract players through GP referrals and also have wheelchair users
- For adult coaching, the warm up & physical training is left out, instead the focus is on teaching the basics and providing people the opportunity to socialise and develop relationships
- For those with a competitive interest, a team is entered into the lower league

Advice

- Be flexible to accommodate all players

Focus on: Flexible Offer Fusion TTC

Junior Participation

All juniors play people with ranging standards and from all walks of life. The club has also engaged students on the fringe of anti-social behaviour – providing opportunities to divert young people from negative behaviour and involve them in more positive activities.

There are a range of offers for juniors to choose from, allowing players to move between groups:

- Open sessions available for all players and ages
- Schools programme
- Junior coaching programme
- Training camps

The local league welcomes junior players by allowing teams made up of just junior players to play all their matches at home.



Social Aspect

In early 2014, Fusion TTC moved to a venue with 24/7 access, a social area and a kitchen. The social area is used for playing draughts and chess – games for the mind that complement table tennis. Within the club all players are treated the same – table time is not prioritised to anyone.

Key Points

- There are a number of good coaches and people who support the club
- Adult and junior coaching sessions are offered on a Saturday to build player relationships across the age groups

Advice

- Be respectful – “leave your ego at the door” culture encouraged at the club
- Be welcoming and inclusive – you can’t want just one type of group

Points for your Club to Consider



☐ Is your website up to date? Is the website easy to navigate? Are the correct people listed to contact?



☐ How easy is the club to physically find? Think about the ways that people will get there, e.g. car, public transport, cycle, walk. Is there adequate signage outside?



☐ Does everybody in the club take on the responsibility to be friendly and welcoming to newcomers? Do key people at the club make an effort to remember names?



☐ Does everyone involved in running the club know what a great experience looks like and what the club is working towards achieving?



☐ From our own research, we know people typically play for the social aspect, the development opportunities, feeling good through exercise, or simply for fun

and enjoyment. Do you know why members join, what they want from their experience and what makes them come back? (See the Sport England Profiling Tool on page 18 to help you)



☐ Does the club have the right offers in place to match what the members want? Is the offer flexible to help them overcome any barriers they may face? Think: right coach, right place, right time!



☐ If the time or place of a session changes, how are players notified? Ensure you let newcomers know of how you can communicate with them, e.g. late changes are listed on the website, social media, WhatsApp group etc.

Useful Links & Resources

Sport England Club Matters - free to sign up and full of useful support and guidance on all areas of running a club.

<https://learn.sportenglandclubmatters.com/>

UK Coaching, *"What makes your session unmissable?"*

<https://www.ukcoaching.org/coaches/resource-bank/coaching-participation/youth-participation/what-makes-your-session-unmissable>

Table Tennis England CPD opportunities:

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/coach/coaching/cpd-opportunities/>

Be TT - an enhanced club and league development program from Table Tennis England that will provide our most forward-thinking clubs with greater support

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/clubs/clubs-guidance/be-tt/>

Look out for new club guidance on data protection – coming soon

With Thanks To:

Woodlands TTC

Fusion TTC

Two Circles



Your Club Experience

Think about the journey your Club People experience from starting to think about taking part in your sport or activity, to being a long term, committed club member. Think about all the interactions that happen. These may be face-to-face or remotely through the internet and your communications.

Speak with your members and committee, get their feedback and ask yourself the following questions. Think about what the experience and interactions are like for each.

1. Why do people join and stay part of your club? Do you know what they want from the club?
2. How do you keep members interested in the club and wanting to come back? Does your offer meet their wants and needs?
3. How do people find out about your club? What messages do they receive?
4. What happens when a new member turns up for the first time?
5. What does a brilliant experience look like? Does everyone in your club know, and agree, what this is and the role they play in making it real?



Now, identify **3 clear actions** that you and club will take to deliver a consistently brilliant experience to all your members, new and current.

Review and update these every few months to make sure you stay on track.

Action 1	What do you need?	Who is responsible?	By when?
Action 2	What do you need?	Who is responsible?	By when?
Action 3	What do you need?	Who is responsible?	By when?

Provided above is an example of the templates available through Club Matters to support the develop and sustainability of your club.

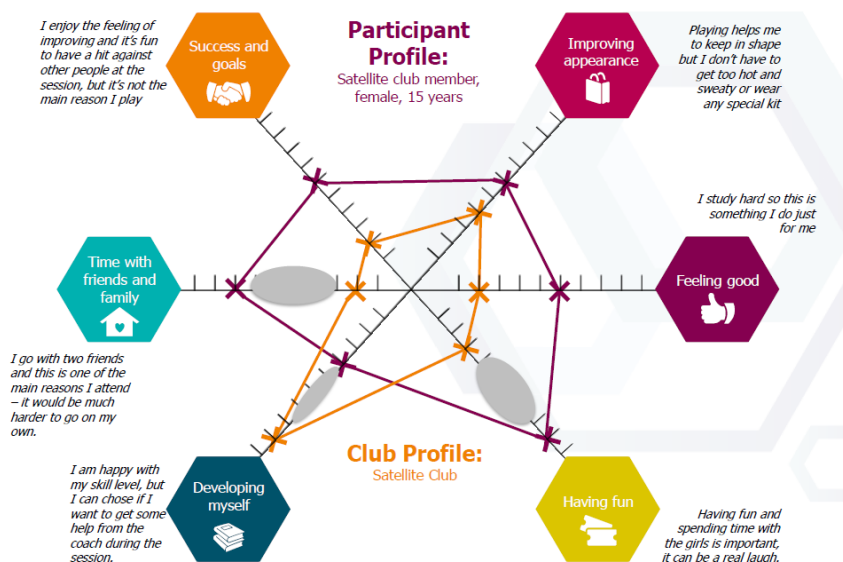
For full resource please go to:
<https://learn.sportenglandclubmatters.com/>

Understanding Your Members

The diagrams included here are to help you consider your club's current members and how they align with you club offer.



Below is an example from Sport England Club Matters of how you can profile both the needs and wants of your members and your club offer:



Understanding Your Members: Template

To find out more about how to complete, please visit the [ClubMatters website](#).

