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# Developing a performance management framework for a national sport organisation



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## ABSTRACT

Organisational performance has become an imperative management function within the non-profit sport context as increased pressure is placed on these organisations to provide a quality service to stakeholders in an accountable and transparent manner. The case presented here examines the issue of developing and implementing a robust performance management tool that can potentially help national sport organisation managers with the multitude of performance challenges now facing these organisations. The theoretical underpinnings of a performance management tool are presented followed by background information to a fictional national sport organisation (Racquetball Australia) and views from the CEO of the organisation in relation to the topic of performance management. The case is written from a fictional perspective so that instructors may adapt the case to suit the geographical context in which the class is taking place.

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## Teaching note

### 1. Introduction

The issue of organisational performance has become an important topic in sport management as the level of public investment in non-profit sport organisations, such as national sport organisations, state sport organisations and similar bodies, has grown to such a level that transparent and accountable measures and systems are called for to monitor such investment. This has not gone unnoticed within the academic world with a number of studies affording attention to this important area (Bayle & Madella, 2002; Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Misener & Doherty, 2009; O'Boyle & Hassan, 2014; Winand, Zintz, Bayle, & Robinson, 2010; Winand, Rihoux, Robinson, & Zintz, 2012). Various government agencies, including the Australian Sport Commission and Sport NZ, are also emphasising the importance of this area with their partner organisations to ensure a good return on the allocation of funding that partner organisations receive. Within the non-profit environment in general, developments such as the McKinsey Capacity Self-Assessment Tool (McKinsey & Company, 2014) and the Organisational Development Tool (Sport NZ, 2014) have been important tools in the practice of performance management adapted to the non-profit sport sector. Likewise in a European context, the Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS) project and industry reports from Deloitte and Touche (2003) have provided further evidence of the need for these organisations to develop their management competencies. Industry reports like those mentioned here,

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and the SPLISS project in particular, have been an invaluable resource for comparing performance within various organisations and nations, and have provided theoretical models as to how sport organisations may increase their performance through effective policy making and analysis of some key performance indicators.

In addition, the professional ethos that has taken hold of the sport industry and the increasing pressure being placed on these organisations from sponsors, government, members and other stakeholders requires adequate systems and processes in place to respond to these demands (Slack, 1985). This traditionally volunteer-led industry has resulted in many non-profit sport organisations lacking the capability and expertise to implement such systems (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006; O'Boyle, 2014). But, given the rise of professionalism and the growth of revenue within the sport industry, we are now seeing these organisations aligning with traditional business practices in terms of organisational performance management (O'Boyle, 2012).

The following case highlights the efforts of Racquetball Australia, a fictional national sport organisation, to introduce an organisation-wide performance management system that reflects the strategic imperatives of the organisation and aligns performance reporting with those imperatives. The fundamental dimensions of performance that impact upon the organisation should be addressed and the measures that most appropriately capture the organisation's true performance must be examined. This fictional case is representative of the non-profit sporting environment that operates in Australasia and most European countries and as such, the case can be adapted to suit a variety of contextual environments.

This case study will allow students to:

- Evaluate the operating environment of a non-profit sport organisation, both internally and externally.
- Examine if organisation-wide performance management tools such as the Balanced Scorecard are applicable within non-profit sport organisations.
- Critically examine the various performance management frameworks available for use by a non-profit sport organisation.
- Analyse fundamental areas of performance for a non-profit sport organisation.
- Understand different measures that can indicate if performance targets are being met.

## 2. Delivery

The case is most appropriate for courses relating to sport management, sport governance, sport finance, benchmarking and a range of other sport focussed deliveries. In addition, the case is also relevant to traditional business courses such as organisational theory and organisational behaviour and may provide unique insights into the challenges that non-profit sport organisations face compared to their traditional business counterparts.

### 2.1. Student activity

After students are presented with the case study material, they could be separated into groups to form a 'committee or board' within the organisation as the body responsible for developing and implementing a new performance management system. Following group discussion, they could be asked to present their proposal for a new performance management system either orally or in writing to the instructor or class as a whole. Alternatively, students could address the case on an individual basis (as a consultant) and present their proposal for a new performance management system in a similar manner.

Taking into account the case study material, the templates for a performance management tool as discussed below, and the unique operating environment of the non-profit sport industry, two example tasks may be:

- i. Choose one of the performance management templates (Balanced Scorecard, Performance Prism or Organisational Development Tool) described below and apply it to Racquetball Australia.
- ii. Based on the operating environment of Racquetball Australia and the information supplied regarding performance management tools, develop what you perceive to be a suitable performance management template taking ideas from each existing tool and incorporate appropriate measures for each performance dimension you identify.

### 2.2. Case resources

- The Balanced Scorecard
- The Performance Prism
- Sport NZ: Organisational Development Tool
- Performance Management in Action: The NZRU 'Scoreboard'

## References

- Bayle, E., & Madella, A. (2002). Development of a taxonomy of performance for national sport organizations. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 2(2), 1–21.
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