

Hustle Not Hassle

A World of Difference

When it comes to getting things accomplished through people – **Hustle** is the key. No, not unpleasantly. No, not to become a total nuisance. No, not so that people see you from a distance and move away quickly, hoping you won't notice.! That constitutes hassling and turns others off. **Hustle not Hassle!**

Hassle is those unsolicited phone calls you get when you are about to have dinner; it's the committee chairperson who thinks you have nothing better to do than handle their queries at any time of the day or night; it's the person who just can't take a hint and persists in trying to engage or sell you on something that you have little or no interest in. It's those annoying American Express card representatives at the airport and in shopping centres.

To get sustainable results you must consistently, firmly and pleasantly "**Hustle**" not hassle.

Hustle is where you invite people to become involved in a project, club or event; you elicit from them their needs and wants and show them how they might genuinely get these met through the project.

Case study – Bondi Running & Triathlon Club's bid for the State Titles

In my sporting life outside of my consulting work, our leadership team at the Bondi Running and Triathlon Club – BRAT's (all volunteers) have hustled our way, very successfully, to State Championships in the sport of Triathlon over the past 5 years, after a history of consistent 3rd placings and a very big gap to 2nd and 1st. In the process we upset the two top Triathlon clubs in the state, Warringah and Cronulla, capturing the quodous, bragging rights and more importantly, clout necessary to increase our attractiveness to sponsors, existing and potential new members.

A one off? Not on your Nelly. Not only have we taken out the NSW Club Championships or been runner up for the past 5 years we have also become National Club Champions every year since it's inception 3 years ago. The main success criteria we discovered was numbers.

In the sport of Triathlon, outside of the elite, races are competed in male and female 5 year age groups right through to 70+.

Filling every 5 year age group from 15 years old through to 70 was crucial. In addition, providing 3 qualified officials from your club, who had officiated at a minimum of 3 races during the season was vital, as each contributed 10 points to the eventual points tally.

Triathletes can, of necessity be quite a selfish breed due to the incredible amount of time required to train for the 3 different disciplines that make up Triathlon – Swim, Bike and Run. Also, the State Championships until 2006 was the only race in a season

that was scored on the basis of the combined results of club members. In all other races you would just race as an individual – your club affiliation being recognised but having no influence on the result.

Therefore, getting members or lapsed members to the State Clubs Championship, held at Port Stephens since its inception in 1995, had traditionally been very tough and our team would hover around 45 to 55 people in total. Some members would not be members Triathlon NSW (a requirement to race at State Clubs Championships) because they weren't racing during the season and therefore didn't want to pay for the required license. Hustle not hassle became the key to our successfully 'minding the gap' between our previous intentions and our desired reality.

In 2002 we experienced our first State Clubs Championship win, with a total team of 126 people. The following year other clubs responded by recruiting much larger numbers to race where total entries rose from around 480 in 2002 to 980 in 2006. Using the same formula the BRAT Club has gone on to win the first 3 Australian Triathlon Clubs Championships in 2006 and 2007 and 2008.

So what were the 7 principles that underpinned our success:

7 Keys to Hustling for Success

1. Be clear on What you are aiming for and Why. (You need a good reason to Hustle)

We had never won the NSW Clubs Championships before and doing so would give all our members even more reason to be proud of our great club and bring us closer; we would improve our profile as a club in the triathlon and general community; we would attract more sponsorship which would mean we could put on more events for members. Great Reasons!

2. Communicate early, clearly and regularly reinforcing the What and Why. (You can refer to these communications when you hustle)

In our case we sent an initial email 9 months out from the event with an accommodation request form. We included our goal and results from previous year which we wanted to better. We then followed up as the event came closer so did the frequency of our communication – including daily during the last. “6 sleeps to go!” “5 sleeps to go!”

3. Build a hand picked team of Hustlers. (Ensures you select the appropriate people and helps overcome any psychological resistance to Hustling)

Involve them in setting stretch targets; their agreement to be held to account, and the metrics that will be used. **(People are more likely to hustle if they know they are being measured and will be held to account)** In Triathlon we compete in 5 year age groups, male and female, right up to 70 -74. We had an age-group captain for each of the 13 age groups for each sex – 26 people with a clear mandate and the resources to follow through. We also had one male

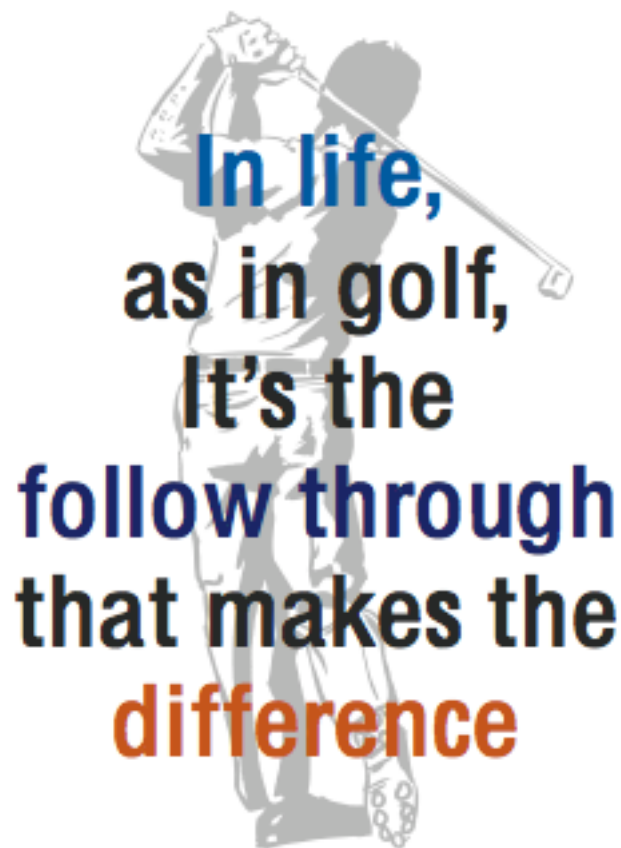
captain and one female captain to oversee and hold all the age group captains for their gender to account.

4. Provide the team with the appropriate resources. (This enables the team to Hustle and takes away excuses)

We provided every age-group captain with the email and phone numbers for everyone in their age-group and highlighted the know top performers who were our priorities along with key milestones to be achieved.

5. Keep the pressure on. (Hustlers make the phone calls, have face to face meetings, illicit a promise, secure a deposit, remove obstacles and follow-through)

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Get the team to track their success on multiple levels – Verbal commitments are not enough these days. Money talks! Provide examples of when, where and how to Hustle. Focus on places or media frequented by your target audience and enquire as to their availability/confirm their availability and ask them to recruit others.

As the Club Captain and then President during much of this time I needed to role model the behaviours I was seeking from the team - Every day I would arrive at training early and talk to people before, during and after training, barring work and travel commitments.

When I showed up for coffee after training I would gauge people's reaction to my presence to ascertain whether I was taking this too far; confirm conversations by email, with more context and numbers and ask for their help.

6. **Provide a Specific call to action for your target market, ideally with some sort of incentive – (A great excuse for your team to hustle that is in targeted group's best interest)**

“Sign up now and save 15%.” “Limited accommodation – book yours now to avoid disappointment.” “Be part of history – Make BRAT's number 1!”.

We would put out regular updates to all our members to let them know how we were going in terms of numbers in each age group and where the gaps were. This also allowed them to help us mind the gaps.

7. **CELEBRATE small successes along the way and communicate them to everyone. (Hustlers love positive feedback). You must publicise your success or improvement when D-Day is over and truly acknowledge and congratulate everyone - Win or lose.**

We communicated our results, with some editorial, to the whole club and used this as our first communication piece for the following year.

Could you apply these principles to your business? Let me know how you fare.