

# Guerilla Marketing

## Your Swim Team

A Workbook For Swim Coaches and Other Leaders

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### 201 Ways to Build a Team and Reach Your Goals



Most of you are probably aware of the series of books by Jay Conrad Levinson and his friends. Each book has Guerilla Marketing in the title. No, they aren't about selling hairy creatures that can open a coconut with their bare hands! A guerilla is the warrior, in this case the business warrior, who uses all the creative tools he/she can find or learn to accomplish a mission. What started with one book has now been popularized by the business community into a bookshelf full of them.

There's Guerilla Marketing On-line, Guerilla Marketing Excellence, etc. Of course there are other great and popular marketing

books not in this particular series. One of my favorites is 301 Do-It-Yourself Marketing Ideas from America's Most Innovative Small Companies.

It strikes me that few if any of us swim coaches are given much education in the marketing arena. The point is this: **if we are to enhance our image and "sell" our sport, we've got to learn from the best to compete successfully.** The Guerilla Marketing books helped spark some of the following ideas. The training and practice given this author at the Covey Leadership Center, by the Pecos River Change Management Group, and twenty-five years of teaching and coaching help too. Many ideas came from coaches around the world. I thought a collection of these ideas would be useful to you. I present them to you and challenge you to assist with more.

### Who is Our Competition?

The first issue is defining our competition. Well, maybe we need to step back just one more step and examine our goals; defining ourselves. Here's a great question to ask yourself when it comes to building and promoting your swim team –

*"What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?"*

What if you instituted ideas, such as those which follow in this workbook, and your team grew to proportions which exceeded your dreams? Could you handle that success? Maybe the better question is: what do you want? How many swimmers do you want in each lane. Do you have any pools that you could use you presently don't? Are there any times at your available pools that aren't filled? Do you want to choose from ten thousand athletes your most-likely-to-succeed fifty? Leadership guru Anthony Robbins gives a very entertaining performance. Once, onstage he had a big crowd riled up and asked from the stage if anyone wanted to make more money. The frenzied hord stood up and yelled, "yes!". Robbins looked down and saw a man standing in front with a big smile on his face. Robbins pointed to the man and the television monitors picked upon the scene. "You sir, Robbins asked, you want to make more money?" Robbins had been making a point of teaching enthusiasm so the man duitifully screemed, "yes!" once again to the applause of the crowd. Suddenly

Robbins strided to the stairs leading down from the stage and walked over to the man, cameras following. Robbins said with a smile, “this man wants more money.” He shook the man’s hand and then Robbins reached into his pocket and pulled out a quarter and handed it to the man, whose smile had dimmed a little. His point made about the need to have very clear goals, Robbins climbed back on stage.

Most coaches I know want their teams to grow. Just to appease this writer, please mentally set a goal size for your team before reading on. It would be great if my team size was \_\_\_\_\_ swimmers.

The scientific oriented East Germans used to describe our swim programs this way: “They (American coaches) treat their swimmers like eggs in a basket. They swing the basket around and throw it at the wall. Whichever eggs don’t break, those are their competitors.” Hmm. The funny thing is that this was said when America was at her swimming peak and the East Germans had to cheat and cheat big to compete with us. But they had a point we should listen to. We often forget what business cannot forget – to set goals, and define the competition and other obstacles which may hinder our progress toward those goals. And then to plan and claim victory over those obstacles and that competition.

So, define how many swimmers you want in each lane in each time slot, or group, and each pool. How old are these swimmers? \_\_\_\_\_ How much are they paying per year? How much are they fund raising? \_\_\_\_\_. How many coaches do you want to assist you? \_\_\_\_\_ What is the coach to swimmer ratio? \_\_\_\_\_ And don’t be any more embarrassed than a dentist or plumber to also decide how much *you* are being paid, now that your team is this economically successful.

OK, now we can continue. We have a goal. Let’s say, so we have an example, that it’s 200 swimmers. You may want 2,000 or 20. That’s fine; it’s your team, your life, and don’t forget, your business. Now let’s go to market.

Levinson defines a guerilla as someone who probably doesn’t have a lot of money for advertising campaigns. A guerilla is, by definition, creative, not only in his or her marketing, but in his or her services (remember that—more later). A guerilla is a warrior, aiming to win by unconventional means, poised to adapt to changing market conditions and focused on serving his customers, even his suppliers, and everyone else with whom he comes in contact. A guerilla makes no apologies for striving to win, and no excuses for failure. Every obstacle, every mistake, just makes him stronger, tougher, more focused, more creative, and more effective.

That sounds like the swimmers we want to coach; it sounds like the material which makes for the most successful coaches! On a daily basis we’re “convincing” our swimmers to swim faster, with strokes that reduce drag. We know the competition. For the purpose of our business model, **let’s define the competition as anything or anyone who strives to capture the attention of our present and future swimmers.** Remember our goal is not just to get our recruitment goals met, but to keep them met. In other words, let’s not only get our 200 swimmers, let’s keep our team at that number from now on, ideally with a waiting list.

The main question to ask yourself, as if you were one of your swimmers, is this:

*“Of all the things I could be doing with my time and energy, why swim?”*

## Why swim?

The motto in our company, Tropical Penguin, is that *Swimming Faster Is Fun*. We chose this because numerous studies in youth and adult sports have all concluded that the number one reason people are doing what they are doing is that it’s fun.

So all your marketing materials need to be aimed at that reality: Competitive swimming is fun. That doesn’t mean it can’t be hard. In fact, sometimes the harder it is, the more fun it can be. In what may seem to be an ironic coincidence, studies have shown that groups that are difficult to join and difficult to stay in are more highly valued by the members. Of course this value must be backed up with results – for example, if your butterflyers go ten thousand meters fly a day and still no one breaks 2:20 in the 200, the value ascribed by your swimmers may soon diminish. This is a results-oriented sport and rightly so, but “fun” has a more complex structure than just playing on the diving board or games like Marco Polo.

Whether it’s a group of kids hanging out on the street, or a collection of adults at the gym or at lunch, in order to get them to even consider joining your team, you have to give them the answer to this question: “Why swim?”

List fifty reasons to swim and to swim faster. Borrow reasons if you wish. This will also encourage you to continue to develop the value of your swim team which, as with any business, changes to reflect the “marketplace”.

Well, let’s say we’ve defined and memorized how great competitive swimming is. We’ve got a goal. We’ve got fun and interesting practices and various levels and types of competition which lead our teams to success. It’s time to describe and define our competitor’s time, money, and relationships.

1.	11.	21.	31.	41.
2.	12.	22.	32.	42.
3.	13.	23.	33.	43.
4.	14.	24.	34.	44.
5.	15.	25.	35.	45.
6.	16.	26.	36.	46.
7.	17.	27.	37.	47.
8.	18.	28.	38.	48.
9.	19.	29.	38.	49.
10.	20.	30.	40.	50.

We’ll be quick here, but don’t underestimate your competitors. And don’t overestimate them either. You can and should win this race.

## Your Competitors

Television. Nintendo and other video games. Other sports. Music. Hanging out. Drugs. Parties. Sex. Parental laziness. Ineffective parental stereotypes. Coach overload. Our own complaining swimmers. Movies. School. Friends. Money, time, boredom, chlorine, cold, muscle soreness, fatigue, too much accountability, perceived lack of team and play. Advertising. The instant gratification philosophy of the surrounding culture. Can you think of other “competitors” for the time and attention of people who would otherwise choose to pay and participate on your competitive swim team?

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In order to sell any product or service, every successful business addresses these competitors for the hearts, minds, time, money, and energy of their customers. Swimming cannot be an exception.

So, now look at *your* program. Coach Bob Steele is, in my opinion, the best guerilla marketer USA Swimming ever had on staff. Once, in reference to practice and competition, he said something like: “If it’s not fun for me to watch, I can pretty much guess it’s not fun for them to do.” Though the subject of another article, you might want to consider if there might be others ways to reach your training and biomechanic goals which present your team in a more effective marketing format. I would be the last person to suggest any coach compromise excellence, but if there are ways which make training more fun, I suggest you, as has Bob Steele, find them.

So now, let’s get to a short list that we can all add to. I am hopeful that USA Swimming will someday know and congratulate its grass roots coaches, on, for one, the percentage of the community that swim on their teams. There is no such award and don’t expect one to arrive in your mailbox soon. You are the leader and it’s your community and your family and team that relies upon the effects of your leadership. Don’t wait for some parent or school to confer upon you this right. It is yours by definition to use or abuse.

Define your market. How many children attend school in a reasonable geographic circumference around your pool(s)? How many adults are there who might swim on your masters team? Is there a market for lessons? How many children cannot swim at all in your community?

Now, let’s focus on the marketing itself: The goal is to make people aware of the benefits of your

programs. The three most powerful ways are television, radio, and newspapers. It may surprise some coaches to hear that simply passing flyers through the schools might not be enough to help them reach their goals. Imagine if that's all Coke did! Their loyal patrons might be drinking Pepsi. Every modern business knows that you have to saturate your market with your message. In fact the rule of thumb is this:

✓ **People only notice your ad once out of three times they are exposed to it and they only buy after they have noticed your ad at least seven times.**

That means the people in your community must see your team at least twenty-one times to "buy" what you offer. That's a minimum. To accomplish this, you need help. Everyone's help. Do you have a member of your team whose job it is to publicize your program? If not, you need one. In fact, as a mentor, I suggest that if you had only one board member or only one person on your booster club, this would be the one you would want. **In business, sales are the single most important thing.** You can have the most fantastic widget in the world, but if you don't market it, you'll go broke. You can have the most fantastic service in the world, but if no one takes advantage of it, you aren't very effective.

✓ **I believe that the transition from a nation of volunteer coaches to one of professional coaches is not complete until coaches see their teams as businesses needing marketing.** The great thing is that when your present swimmers and their parents see your team in all the ads in all these twenty one or more places, they will feel even better about what they are doing with their time, money, and relationships relative to competitive swimming. I implore you to act now to make marketing of competitive swimming *your* number one priority after loving and caring for your athletes.

✓ **Take a look at your budget.** Now think Coke. It costs about a penny to make a can of coke. It costs half the price of a can to market it. I agree with you that you have something to sell that is far more valuable than a can of coke, but you cannot break the principles of marketing just because you have a good product. In fact, I implore you to realize that it's *because* you have a great product that you must market even more aggressively.

You looked at your budget, now ✓ **look at your calendar.** Of the 168 hours last week your team was a business, how much time was spent on promoting your service? You see the problem? You see the solution? Of course you do. This is a simple shift in the way you see the world (your "paradigm"). A simple shift of paradigm can rock your world. Chances are no one gave you a coaching manual that said much at all about marketing. This shift, if you will carefully bring it to life, will transform your team and add great value not only to those who may join your present swimmers, but the lives of those swimmers already questioning the relative value of their participation. This simple shift of focus, if manifested in a comparable shift in your budget and distribution of your time as a leader and as a team, will have an astounding impact in making swimming faster fun. And, hey, if you need even more motivation, work backwards from your dream income. I believe many coaches, especially in America could shift their yearly income to their monthly income. Is there some law that keeps you from making \$20,000 a month?

The following ideas are just scratching the creative surface. Of course you can't institute all these ideas at once. Even if you can, develop an annual plan first and spread them out. You want to hit your market, every person in your market, at least twenty-one times this year. Remember that not each of these actions will hit each member of your market. But, as the number one function after your actual teaching and coaching of your swimmers, be prepared to give it the creative and real nose-to-the-grindstone effort it deserves.

What's possible? Let me give you a statistic you won't believe, but is true. In Australia, Carlisle Swim School teaches 25,000 children to swim a week! They have over 200 coaches. And, this is the clincher, their market area is a geographic region about the same size as the average swim team in America!

## **The First 201 Ways To Build Your Team and Reach Your Goals**

(in random order)

1. Train your swimmers, parents, etc. to recruit and sell your team. Run short training sessions with scenarios of what to say and how to say it, including counters to the ten most common reasons people might not choose to join swim teams.

2. Make sure everyone on your team knows the goal, what's in it for them when the goal gets attained, etc.
3. Make your flyers, business cards, and brochures in color and use a professional graphic artist to get it right. Careful planning and writing can help you here too. If you've got a pro on your team or get a college student majoring in graphic art and marketing, that would save a lot of money. Print most your materials in color on the front and black and white on the back. It's often cheaper to make full color flyers if you make enough at one time than to go to Kinkos and make a few hundred on normal stock. Search for discount printers on-line unless you can get someone local to donate or give a substantial discount.
4. Give 100 flyers to everyone on your team and send them out into neighborhoods, shopping malls, etc. to personally distribute them.
5. Pretend, even if you don't do it, that you doubled your fees for your team. Now write a brochure to encourage people to join on the basis of the benefits to them and their families. The more value *you* ascribe to your program as you write your brochure, the more the reader will ascribe as he reads it.
6. Give flyers to kids and brochures to parents and have a specific accountable plan for distribution.
7. Sponsor a program or buy ad time at the local cable access channel.
8. Show up at the local soccer championship at the end of the season with a whole team of flyer distributors. Boldly distribute them in the stands, not on the cars. Speak to people.
9. Post a sign across a major street telling about your tryouts at least twice a year.
10. Give everyone on your "team" at least 25 business cards to have with them all the time. Print the front and back with information about your team. (Remember your team includes swimmers, brothers and sisters, parents, school administrators, anyone who would or could possibly assist in this mission.)
11. Sell T-shirts to the general public. Make sure every parent, every board member, everyone who will wear it can easily get at least one of your team T-shirts.
12. When you think of the cost of advertising also think of the income from one new member. If you charge \$50 a month, that's \$600 a year. It doesn't take very many new members to pay for a lot of advertising. And that \$600 income doesn't include fund-raising (or bringing in new swimmers on their own)!
13. Have a dedicated phone answering machine with an 800 number. Why an 800 number? So, no matter where the phone is moved, it doesn't change and because people are much more willing to call a free number even when it's local.
14. Give framed pictures to every pizza place etc. who will put them up. Have your contact information on each one. You might save money by printing them on a ink jet at high resolution. That allows for some text or graphic ad overlay also.
15. Put a display of flyers in every store that will allow it. Use each parent's contacts to get them in and keep them stocked. You can get inexpensive cardboard stands to hold the flyers or business cards. Remember to print in full color and to look your best.

16. Put a small team sticker on every car. Give them to everyone who will post them. Again, there should be contact information on each one (web site or 800 number).
17. If you can't be near the 800 machine, have the calls forwarded. Try to have a human talk to prospective members.
18. Hire every good coach you can, even if just part time or as a filler. Every high school coach, or if you are a high school coach, try to involve the age group or college coach. Remember that the greatest competition for swimmers is *not* other teams.
19. Give free coupons for local businesses when people join. Just ask.
20. Get in the mailing to people who move into your community. Ask realtors for help and make sure every realtor knows that your swim team is one of the better reasons to move into the community. Even invite them to show prospective buyers around your swim practice.
21. Volunteer to take the overflow the city might not be able to handle in summer swim lessons. Make sure that your swimmers are on the staff, and plan to eventually take over the whole program. You can do swim lessons better and more cost effectively. When lessons are over, your swimmers should have personal relationships with the parents and new swimmers. Lead them to your team.
- 22. Every time your swimmers do anything even remotely great write and send an article to the local newspapers.** Team grade-point-average, team workout records and, of course, meet results should never be missed. Even if they only print a few of the articles, keep them coming.
23. Have pictures ready, of the coach, each group, and even the parents for the media. Make their jobs easier and they will love you and support you for it. Also have pictures ready for anyone's internet site, in jpeg or jif format.
24. Get on every community web site and have a great one of your own. If you know someone who can host streaming movies, use that to your full advantage. Make those web movies short and exciting as with all your web efforts. By the way, the technical part of this can be given to a smart high school swimmer, but make sure all content passes through the filter of your team mission.
25. Put a downloadable PDF of all your ad materials on your web site, including your registration form. As with any web site, advertise where it is in all your stationary, cards, newspaper articles, etc.
26. Offer a "class" for the local schools. Release time for teachers is a big issue in public schools. If you offer your team's services during the day, it's possible you can work a deal where the school will either bus swimmers to your facility or, if you work at a school, include your services in their curriculum.
27. Bring a friend. Make sure you get all the parent information and call directly either before or after or both to follow up even if the child doesn't join. Take every opportunity to present the value of your team whether they do anything for you or not. The people they talk to on the soccer team they join may well be interested.
28. Almost every school has morning announcements. Have a parent at each school responsible for making sure every accomplishment of each student who attends each school and who is on your team gets

recognized. This is one of your 21 advertisements, and it makes your swimmers feel appreciated.

29. Have a team uniform day where every swimmer wears a team T-shirt or team sweats to school.
30. Keep every publicity release, newspaper clipping, etc. on a neat bulletin board at the pool and in a scrapbook available to present and potential members. Remember to include these on your web site.
31. Send your newsletter to all council people, the mayor, even your congressman. Include general articles of use in parenting and for kids themselves as well as articles specific to your team. You can get great ideas and quotes from hundreds of sources on and off the net.
32. Give posters or catalogues and flyers to your doctors in town, especially podiatrists and children's centers and dentists. People in waiting rooms are bored – give them something useful to read, something which may keep their children healthier.
- 33. Run a “zero drowning” campaign** – the goal is that every child in your community can swim well enough to make it to shore if a boat capsizes one mile out, or if he or she has to wait four hours or more for assistance. Work with the city, the Red Cross, etc., everyone who assists in this goal, but be the leader and get the publicity. Most, important, reach the goal. It should be embarrassing if a member of the community which includes a competitive swim team drowns for lack of being able to swim.
34. Run at least one swim meet that is fun to watch and invite schools and the general public. Ideally it should look and feel like a dual meet with a great announcer, team cheers, announced point scores along the way, etc. People are used to soccer games and baseball, etc. so give them that level of excitement.
35. Serve. Have the kids work with the elderly or hospitalized people of the community a few times a year. Get publicity and give the priceless gift of service.
36. Always have plenty of catalogues and flyers at your pool.
37. Publicize all the special achievements of your swimmers and coaches and parents. Most other entities don't do a good job of that – so mention that Mary won the piano recital and is also a member of the swim team. Mention that three members of the team were on the dean's list, or that Mr. Cosgrove, who is your board secretary and father of Sue who is a national level swimmer, was just promoted to CEO of Rockwell, etc.
38. Video of your team on C/D or videotape. This is a good marketing tool – make sure you show your team having *fun* – the uninitiated aren't as interested in stress scores and biomechanics.
39. Give something free just for trying out -- goggles, etc. – whatever you can get for cheap or free. Ask your swim vendor for some help – they might have a load of T-shirts that didn't sell, etc. You might give a special prize for the swimmers on your team who bring the most swimmers to tryout.
40. Do cooperative mailings with the city parks and rec, other sports teams, etc. Don't be shy; ask for their help. It's almost half the price if two go in on a mailing and you might get in on many more. You might even get into a free mailing along with a professional mailing for community services – those packets with carpet cleaning services, etc. must work or they wouldn't keep coming.
41. Make sure all the pool supply stores have your flyers and brochures. Put all who do on your web site and

negotiate to get on theirs.

42. Ask for sponsorship of your newsletter from everyone who can benefit from your membership's patronage.
43. Try to get your flyers in all the supermarkets in your area. The section with real estate flyers might work. The bulletin boards might also work.
44. Put a postcard-sized flyer at the post office, the library and any other place that has a bulletin board with public access.
45. Have swimmers stand out in front of stores with the only intention to invite people to tryouts. Offer a discounted or free Saturday "clinic" which might include a T-shirt for everyone who ends up joining. Of course the lesson program you might offer like Swim America, for example could also be advertised this way.
46. Sponsor a charitable event.
47. Get members involved in as many community events as possible. If there is a fun run, or a bake-off, etc. have the swim team represented in as big a way as possible.
48. Train your swimmers and parents to present the team in the best light.
49. Buy or beg free advertisement on community web sites. At least get a big discount if you are a non-profit organization.
50. Attend every city council meeting and every school board meeting. You don't have to stay long, but you should get on the attendance list with the swim team name next to whoever attends. One meeting a year is all it takes for each of twenty-four parent representatives. You don't need to say anything, but your attendance will be noted. If you do get involved, it will be easier to get more pool time, etc. when the need arises.
51. Place ads in local newspapers. Try to get a discount. Certainly get the 15% agency discount for making sure your ad is photo ready. It doesn't have to be big, but it should be there each week.
52. Place a small yellow page ad, even if just a reference in the white pages. Try to get one in the yellow pages too. Negotiate – you'd be surprised how much you can get the price down sometimes. Use their experts in layout design.
53. If you live in a multicultural area, have someone translate your flyer. You don't have to speak much English to get along on the swim team, but you might have to introduce yourself in the language of the parents.
54. Ask each new swim family how they heard about you and keep a log for future reference. This helps small and large businesses determine where to best spend future budgets or amplify in similar areas of effectiveness.
55. Find out what each parent does for a living. That includes you college coaches. That information is useful for recruiting, fund-raising, and other reasons.



56. If you have extra money, hire a publicity company.
57. Call every swim team who has reached your goal and ask them how they did it. I know USA Swimming doesn't tell you who they are, so you'll have to ask around. USA Swim is only as strong as we *require* them to be.
58. Interview randomly drawn sample of your swimmers and parents as to how the team is doing. Ask questions as to why, or if, they would recommend this team over any other youth or masters activity in the community. If you aren't happy with the answers, either educate or change.
59. Big brother/sister program – for new swimmers. This connects those in your program who have experience with those who are new, or deciding whether to join your team. It's good for parents too.
60. Give half price for a private lesson to every family who draws in and keeps a new swimmer for three months.
61. Compete. Find a team in a non competitive area anywhere in the world and compare notes and “race” to your goal of 200 swimmers, or whatever your goal is.
62. Give flyers and even advertise in every church your swimmer's families attend.
63. Have a list of fun adventures encouraged and sponsored by your team. What's the difference? Sponsored events might be the training trip to Hawaii during Christmas break for the seniors. Encouraged events might be the five people who decided to go together to the baseball game after morning practice Saturday. Encouraged events make the team appear to be the community centered.
64. Make you team look and feel exclusive even though it's not. Make the tryout formal and make the one who passes, even if all it takes is a complete lap across the pool, feel like they are special and gifted by your invitation. Mission Viejo used to use gold embossed cards to announce the acceptance of new senior swimmers. In the first couple years after future Olympic coach Mark Schubert took over they went from one Junior National qualifier to “allowing” only those who could *final* at seniors to train with the senior group. Forty of the five-hundred swimmers on the team trained in that exclusive world-beating group.
- 65. Love people.** Be honest. Have fun. No amount of marketing will make up for not caring about people.
66. Discourage cliques by encouraging new groupings of your swimmers in various social and some training activities. The entire team must celebrate the new swimmers and each group's progress toward your team mission for growth and improvement.
- 67. Give each swimmer something to look forward to.** The new swimmer might look forward to his or her first meet. The intermediate swimmers look forward to making the next training group and the travel and apparel that you might offer. The seniors should look forward each season to new and exciting social, training, and competitive opportunities. You need to continue to sell your members forever – the competition doesn't go away just because someone has been on your team ten years. Pretend I'm going to come onto your deck and ask your swimmers at random – what are you looking forward to?
68. There are no negative people, just negative behavior. You can accept the people on your team who might not be as excited as you are about promoting the benefits of swimming, but any negative words and actions have to be nipped in the bud quickly. This is why we always recommend that teams have a career

plan posted in clear site, as well as in the registration materials. Don't surprise your new customers with changed or poor service and don't let them surprise you with negative attitudes or talk that will hurt your chances to grow to your goals.

69. Take a picture of the swimmers who come to tryout and send it to them whether they join or not along with a team picture on a flyer that says either, "welcome", if they joined, or "come join us or cheer us on" if they are still "thinking about it." Remember to include a copy of the newsletter and the team schedule.
70. Have your national swimmers give a clinic for the others a few days before they leave on their trip each time. If you have college swimmers have them give a talk at the schools if some or all of them are eloquent and you can get the principal to agree.
71. Host a swim meet for the classes at the schools. One lap of kicking with a board, maybe even an inner tube race, etc. Organize this idea your way and then present it to the local school principals.
72. Hire a professional speaker for your banquet and do everything else right too. Have your swimmers dress up in ties and dresses and have it at the best place you can afford. Then invite the mayor and every principal, etc., and recognize them as well as your swimmers. If you want a potluck swim banquet, that's fine, but if you want the respect of the community at least get a microphone and a great speaker and show them your best.
73. Put flyers and maybe even a small booth once in a while at the local sporting goods store, even if you use a swim shop for most of your competitive supplies. You and general sporting goods shops have a lot in common. You're a great market for them – the parents of your swimmers like sports and sports clothes – so use that leverage to get their support.
74. Support all your sponsors with banners at your pool and notes in your newsletter. Make sure they put your nicely-framed picture in a visible place at their place of business, trade internet banners, etc.
75. Test a message at your local theater. Many sell or even give advertising space in the pre-movie slides people watch as they wait for the main attraction. Also try to get their support with free movie passes for present and future swimmers, allowing you place your display of circulars on a counter, etc. Then support them in your newsletter, web site, etc.
76. Be ready and able to give the newspaper a digital copy of your meet results if that's what they want. Make it as easy as possible for them to get as many names of your swimmers into the paper as often as possible.
77. Give 10% of your swim-a-thon to local charity and make sure it gets publicized, both as you solicit support and in the paper when the results are given. Name all the major sponsors in the newspaper article.
78. Piggyback on current news or movies. For example, if Jurassic Park 12 hits it big, put a dinosaur in your flyers that go home through the schools.
79. Take your local newspaper columnist to lunch or dinner – get to know these people well enough to know what to get them to thank them for their articles during the year. At Christmas give them a free dinner for two, etc. at their favorite restaurant or a copy of the Entertainment Guide ( a fund-raiser we recommend).

80. Do fun things outside of swimming that can involve people who aren't on the team – a night at the movies and ice cream afterwards is simple, relatively safe, and a bonding experience. Or the cheap seats at a ball game might also be fun.
81. Participate in health fairs or even have a healthy booth of great tasting stuff at a regular city fair.
82. Call people back who don't join the team, who joined and quit, etc. every quarter. Don't let them slip away – learn from them and get them back when you can.
83. Sponsor a scholarship for high achievers at one or more public or private schools from which you wish to draw high achievers.
84. Do something fun, even outrageous, at each holiday. Have Santa visit the pool; have the Easter Bunny run an Easter egg hunt at the pool, Halloween is a tough time to get kids to practice, so maybe run workout in the morning and something fun and quick at night. Think about giving each swimmer a light to keep them safe. Make a public exhibition of this stuff whenever you can.
85. Do everything you can to reduce the time it takes for a *new* family to be fully empowered to recruit new members. Educate them, give them flyers, brochures and cards, etc. The team handbook we haven't talked about would really help here.
86. Rent a limo to take your national team to the airport. Have the age group swimmer of the month accompany the team to the airport. If a member of the press wants to ride along for free, invite him or her too!
87. **Give the 'friendship' award** to the swimmer who gets the most people to tryout for the team each year. If you want to expand this, do it by age group and gender. You can even give the team a reward – a day at the beach, a pizza party, etc. if they reach a certain goal.
88. **Serve.** If you can see a need, and it can be filled in a short time with a lot of people, volunteer or just show up. Wear team clothing and be extra friendly. Look for needs; they will appear.
89. Have swimmers and parents write testimonials about your team and what it's done for them. Collect them and put them in your advertising. Send copies to the mayor, etc.
90. Offer free ice cream to everyone who comes to tryout for your team. A little dry ice and a few big coolers and a trip to the local discount store will help. You might even convince the local ice cream parlor to sponsor your efforts.
91. If you or someone your team is a great motivational speaker, make the services available at schools, business meetings, etc.
92. If you have a masters team, put on a fitness screening and health fair sort of thing for adults in the community. Make access to your team available for everyone, even those who can barely swim. It's amazing what a little care will do in someone's life.
93. Connect with other health-related businesses in your community. Chiropractors, physicians, massage therapists, athletic trainers, biomechanists, and the schools who train them have the same mission as you. Exchange mailing lists, do cooperative advertising where you share the costs and build one-

another's credibility.

94. Rent space on a Billboard. This may sound crazy. But someone on your team may actually have land on which you may construct your own billboard. You might be able to convince a billboard sign company to donate space on a billboard as a public service, etc.
95. Get involved with the Rotary Club and every other service club in your community. They love to sponsor, but make sure you serve them too, by putting their name in your publications as a sponsor, or put up a banner, etc.
96. Ask for favors, even if you don't need them. The most endearing way to get people interested in you is to ask for assistance. Ask McDonalds for cups for your next meet, ask for free ice cream for everyone on your team who brings in a new member or who gets 3.5 or better on their report card, etc. Give them a poster you make of your team picture with a customized thank you, if they will put it up in their store. Don't look for big things at first, and show your class by your gratitude. The main criteria for success is if relationships are born , built upon and maintained over the next year.
97. Apologize. If you or someone on the team does or says something which doesn't follow your mission, apologize and beg forgiveness. Make it right if you can, but use this also as a reason to promote your friendship.
98. Have a great phone message for people who call when no one can be there. Get your friendliest voice to leave an inviting message about the team. Have a separate line or extension if that's how people on your team find out about meets, etc. This way, you focus on your prospective customer.
99. Send a group of swimmers over to the house of a new recruit to welcome them and invite them to a monthly social.
100. Have monthly socials either at or away from the pool. A half-hour at an ice cream place or a Saturday morning after practice movie at someone's house is all it takes. As a leader, just make sure it's happening -- you don't have to be at every function. Remember the mission is the center of your team, not you. You are the coach or other leader and your effectiveness is measured by the effects, not by what you personally do.
101. Put together a Zero Drowning Plan for the community and get every organization you can to get on-board.
102. Get testimonials from civic leaders around the globe and, especially in your own community as to the value of competitive swimming. I heard an ad the other day that said all but two U.S. Presidents could play piano. I believe that President Kennedy and Reagan were swimmers. I'll leave it up to you to find more CEO's, Presidents, Congressmen, etc. to say that competitive swimming on teams like yours was an awesome experience which contributed to their lifelong health and success.
103. Vary your pricing. Have an entry level that is truly entry. You want to compete successfully with soccer, etc. as well as with gymnastics and ice skating on the top end. Give people a half hour three times a week and give others six hours a day plus weights. Make all programs excellent, but chances are you will have a greater impact with your base level, simply because not everyone has the talent or the will to reach your elite group. Both groups are essential and those two and every group in between should be equally shining stars.

104. Be very careful with your exit interviews. When someone quits the team, they should be carefully interviewed as to why. They should be shown the best you have in class and invited to come and watch meets, and to stay involved in any way possible. This lesson took a long time for me to get -- in the dictionary under "coach ego" is a picture of me. But for the betterment of those who are presently involved and who will in the future join your team, shake the hands of those who leave and tell them how valuable they were and are to you. Honestly wish them well and offer whatever limited service you can be. Even if they don't return, even if they join another team, you have shown them the strength that comes from loving people even when they are not participating in your mission and vision. Then continue to build a team that makes them proud they were once a member!
105. Have everyone train and compete in team uniforms. You may wish to have a number of different team caps, and maybe even a crazy cap day, but for the most part, look and act like a single team, not a collection of recreational swimmers or a multi-team invitational. At the very least, have days where you all wear the same uniform. This team look and feel is usually a huge advantage other sports have on us. Let's take that advantage back.
106. Have a number of inter-team dual meets. Make it a big deal and train and reward the elected or chosen team captains for knowing their teammates, leading awesome cheers, and making the environment a fun place in which to participate and to observe.
107. Even if you don't get a billboard, hold a contest for the best six word billboard slogans written by any team member. Let the whole team vote. The got to Kinko's etc. and make a banner to put up at the pool, etc. You might want to modify this contest to make it the top three, etc.
108. Make a big deal about the Mr. and Miss congeniality title in each group of your team.
109. Spend one fifteen minute session a month on teaching swimmers how to be friendly.
110. Have a swimmer each month get up and tell what swimming has done to positively affect his or her life. Film that speech.
111. Collect the best of the speeches by the swimmers and the parents into a single video to show at school functions, or the Rotary Club banquets, the team banquet, the initial meeting with parents, or before big fund raisers, etc.
112. Continue to add to the list of services your team offers its members. Post that list in newsletters, on the bulletin board, etc. Everyone on your team should easily be able to write an add from materials which surround your swimmers.
113. Practice "interview" each of your swimmers on their success. This helps them get used to the pressure of being interviewed once they reach the top level of the sport. It also builds character, speaking skills, and self image. Its also a great source of video for testimonials.
114. Recruit key swimmers. The mayor's daughter, the sports editor's son, the pastor's nephew will benefit as much as anyone from the services of your team. What they experience will help the entire team get and stay noticed.
115. Take advantage of the leadership skills of the most successful political and business leaders in your community. They are often flattered that you would ask for their advice. They will be even more flattered if you take it and get back to them with specific reasons to thank them and ask for more advice.

Remember, it's just advice you are asking for. What you give them in return is something they value -- your sincere admiration of their remarkable talent and vision.

116. Run a triathlon clinic. Even if you don't have a master's team, triathletes typically are weak in the swim and swim coaches typically know more about training for endurance than most triathletes. This helps bring money into the team, as well as promoting the idea of a master's team and the children of the triathletes.
117. Keep records of who got your ads and publicity. Of course this is more difficult with yellow page and newspaper ads than with circulars placed on the doors with rubber bands by your swimmers, but do the best possible estimate. Remember that it will take twenty-one repetitions for most people to "buy".
118. Make a list of the top fifty athletes in your community. You may have to attend college basketball games, high school track meets and football games, etc. Send congratulations when you read about them in the paper as well as an invitation for others in the family to join the swim team. The little brother of a six-six basketball star may well be convinced to swim the two hundred fly instead so as not to compete. The High school basketball season may last just twelve weeks. That leaves forty weeks to be involved with a sport that's really fun, and that doesn't require four other people to be successful. Don't give up on the best athletes just because they haven't traditionally chosen to swim, but make sure you have something to offer them that would make you choose swimming.
119. Make a big deal of the Swim-A-Thon. Two hundred laps seems like child's play to most swimmers, but to the average person, it's a real accomplishment. Showcase the five-year-olds who may swim a hundred laps. Quote them in a newspaper article as saying how easy and fun it was. Do not stress the impossibly hard workouts -- stress the fact that swimmers are really the only water safe people in the community and that fitness is something that's progressive and fun if you're a swimmer on this team.
120. Make sure that the team's phone number or web site appears in every newspaper article and that all newspaper articles are archived on your web site, even if you have to re-type them.
121. Make sure the principle of each school your swimmers attend knows who is a swimmer and gets a team picture and a team newsletter with the swimmer's name outlined in yellow for him or her.
122. Invite principles to your mind-and-body lunch. A mind and body lunch is for swimmers who achieve 3.5 GPA while active on the team. The principles may not attend, but the invitation won't be forgotten.
123. If you live in a cold climate, schedule a travel meet in a warm climate sometime in the winter and allow your swimmers to get suntans. This is where having spend time teaching your swimmers to recruit pays dividends. When people ask them where they've been they tell those who ask how much fun they had, and hand them a card inviting them to try out. They tell them about a meet in three months where they are sure to have just as much fun.
124. Be enthusiastic at workout. Be real, but show enthusiasm. Find as many ways as possible to make heroes of everyone.
125. Have the times for each test set posted boldly at the pool and help swimmers race toward improvement in those test sets as often as reasonable. Try not to miss a chance to say good job, you're making progress. If there are guests around ham it up just a little. This is worth more than giving them a hundred bucks.

126. Plan the summer as early as possible and encourage parents to plan vacations around big meets and practice. Taking two to three weeks off after nationals in August gives people plenty of time to take vacations. Don't be surprised that first year swimmers take off at inappropriate times, but help athletes and their parents by letting them know your plan as early as possible -- a year in advance if you can.
127. Bring in fresh blood. Have a guest coach show up once in a while. Have that coach do his or her thing and never miss a chance for them to tell your team the ways his or her team has grown and promoted its mission.
128. Invite the public to an exciting dual meet. Make sure your announcer knows swimming, has the time standards and the running point score in front of him or her and allows time for team cheers. Make up "tickets" to attend the meet -- this is simply good marketing -- and give them away free, but welcome these people at the door and hand them a flyer/program as they enter. Have a raffle or lottery on the score of the meet. Give awards for spirit and make a big deal about it. Make a big deal about time improvement and make sure to introduce members of the home team enthusiastically. Teach your swimmers to wave to the crowd and to show enthusiasm and grace. Tell the other team why you show off the way you do and encourage them to do the same. Simply stated, have a really great time and show it in front of as many people as possible. Make swimming a spectator sport. Make the meet last no more than two hours and have a public barbeque afterward. Give them a "free lesson pass". Adjust any of these ideas to suit your situation.
129. If you have older swimmers, get involved in a "slave auction" with other sports teams in the community to benefit an important cause. Swimmers are auctioned off to do four hours of household chores for the highest bidder in the community. You might have parents go with the swimmers or auction in pairs if security is an issue.
130. Take on a public task, like cleaning up an unsightly area around city hall, etc. Try to choose something that will bring recognition.
131. Do some service you will never be recognized for. This teaches swimmers the value of anonymous service and builds your teams from the inside out. Make sure you get to approve of what they choose to do to keep it safe, but then swear one another to secrecy and just do it.
132. Do a classy team calendar. Not only should the swimmers be clothed, they should be dressed up and looking their best for each month. I know this flies in the face of beefcake and lifeguard television shows, but the class of it will surprise your customers. Exploitation is a short-lived promotion -- we are after the trust and long term relationship of our community.
133. Send articles to Swimming World. If they get published, put them up at the pool, and of course on the web site. If they are really great, put them in flyers etc. Always send pictures and always follow up.
134. Find a "sister" team in another country and build up the relationship. Then plan an exchange where swimmers from their country stay in your homes and you stay in theirs. For the price of a round-trip ticket, swimmers get to have the experience of a lifetime.
135. Build a relationship with every theme park, and every other fun amusement in your area. Get them to give you discounts on tickets or free tickets in exchange for advertising space in your newsletter. This is an even better reason to make sure your newsletter gets out to as many interested people as possible.
136. Have an award called the Mayor's Award at your banquet. This is easy to get publicity for and almost

ensures someone from the city council will attend your banquet.

137. Take the high school coaches and their wives out for dinner a few days before the high school state championships.
138. If there is a college in the community, take that coach out to lunch and let him or her know your plans for your team, your top swimmers and their graduation dates, and ask what you can do for them.
139. Hire a big name College coach to speak at your banquet. While in town, try to get him or her a speaking gig at the most important meeting you can. Also, notify the press and invite them too, or stop by and introduce him or her to your favorite staff writer.
140. If you have a young team, take them and a friend to a college or top senior meet or workout.
141. If you have a great senior team, try to get a dual meet with a college team.
142. Post the team history on the web site. Also post the team vision with as much detail as you can.
143. Have stock thank you card and invitations ready for the laser printer or great personal handwriting and use it frequently.
144. Develop a Team Builder of the Year Award for those who show the greatest creativity and effectiveness in bringing in new swimmers and making them feel a part of the team.
145. Put together a one-page list of safety tips for the home. Make it part of your 100% Watersafe campaign and give them out free. Better yet get a print shop to sponsor it and have it laminated. Make sure your team 800 number and web site are on the page as well as an offer to answer questions regarding water safety by E-mail.
146. Offer a free tryout. Many teams do this, but their next step is usually pretty expensive and inflexible. Instead of requiring a commitment to join the team as a regular member, put together a six-week session to teach new swimmers the basics of competitive swimming. Give them a meet at the end of that six weeks and give them a T-shirt -- all for \$49.95 or so. If you expect a huge response, or have limited water time, each session can be as little as a half hour or you may even have it just three days a week. Some people like that better and it gives you the paradigm you want -- swimmers who earn more water time are much better to coach than those who are forced into minimum attendance. That said, make the price of regular membership attractive at the end of the sixth week by charging only the annual fee. Then on the eighth week, their regular monthly dues won't seem so high, and, in fact give them more value for their money. Make sure you show them this.
147. 100 words that help people want to buy what you are offering (use some of these in your ads, publicity releases and verbal description of your team): Absolutely.. Amazing.. Approved.. Attractive.. Authentic.. Bargain.. Beautiful.. Better.. Big.. Colorful.. Colossal.. Complete.. Confidential.. Crammed.. Delivered.. Direct.. Discount.. Easily.. Endorsed.. Enormous.. Excellent.. Exciting.. Exclusive.. Expert.. Famous.. Fascinating.. Fortune.. Full.. Genuine.. Gift.. Gigantic.. Greatest.. Guaranteed.. Helpful.. Highest.. Huge.. Immediately.. Improved.. Informative.. Instructive.. Interesting.. Largest.. Latest.. Lavishly.. Liberal.. Lifetime.. Limited.. Lowest.. Magic.. Mammoth.. Miracle.. Noted.. Odd.. Outstanding.. Personalized.. Popular.. Powerful.. Practical.. Professional.. Profitable.. Profusely.. Proven.. Quality.. Quickly.. Rare.. Reduced.. Refundable.. Remarkable.. Reliable.. Revealing.. Revolutionary.. Scarce.. Secrets.. Security.. Selected.. Sensational.. Simplified.. Sizable.. Special.. Startling.. Strange.. Strong.. Sturdy.. Successful..



Superior.. Surprise.. Terrific.. Tested.. Tremendous.. Unconditional.. Unique.. Unlimited.. Unparalleled.. Unsurpassed.. Unusual.. Useful.. Valuable.. Wealth.. Weird.. Wonderful.

148. Phrases that move people to action (these are from direct sales letters, and not all of them are appropriate to growing your swim team, but they help you get into the right frame of mind as a business owner): Act now!.. Send your name.. All sent free to introduce.. Amazing literature.. Free.. Ask for free folder.. Bargain lists sent free.. Be first to qualify.. Booklet free!.. Catalog included free.. Complete details free.. Current list free.. Dealers write for prices.. Description sent free.. Details free!.. Dime brings details.. Everything supplied!.. Exciting details free.. Extra for promptness.. First lesson, 25 cents.. Folder free!.. For literature, write:.. Free booklet explains.. Free plans tell how.. Free selling kit.. Free wholesale plan.. Free with approvals.. Full particulars free.. Get facts that help.. Get started today!.. Get your copy now!.. Get yours wholesale.. Gifts with purchases.. Illustrated lists free.. Interesting details free.. Investigate today.. It's Free!.. Act Now!.. Literature free.. Mail material to:.. Money making facts free.. No obligation! Write!.. Offer limited!.. Send today.. Only 10 cents to introduce.. Order direct from:.. Order Now!.. Don't Delay!.. Particulars free.. Postcard brings details.. Request free literature.. Revealing booklet free.. Rush name for details.. Sales kit furnished.. Sample details free.. Samples sent on trial.. See before you buy.. Send for free details.. Send for it today.. Send no money.. Send post card today.. Send 15 cents for mailing.. Send today.. Send your want lists.. Stamp brings details.. Stamped envelope brings.. Test lesson free.. Unique sample offer.. Valuable details free.. Write for free booklet free.. Write us first!.. Yours for the asking.. 15 cent stamp for details.. \$1 brings complete.. 32-page catalog free
149. Publish your credentials. If you aren't proud of them, continue your education. It doesn't necessarily take formal schooling. You can attend leadership clinics as I did like those given by the Covey Leadership Center, the Pecos River training and Consulting Firm, etc. You can take courses at local colleges, or complete advanced degrees. If you don't expect your swimmers to stagnate, you can't either and make sure the people considering swimming under your leadership know your background and continuing education. Your team should support your growth just as you do theirs. By the way, if you're not a coach, this still applies to you as a contributing leader of your team.
150. Start and make available to everyone on your promotion team a file of the best advertisements you receive in the mail, on-line, etc.
151. If you find an ad that works, don't change it! Though you need to be highly active and get the message out at least twenty-one times to each prospective customer, you don't have to change it each time. In fact, if you want people to notice you, wear the same type of visual "clothes" -- the same logo, the same colors, the same slogans. Test your ads, and be willing to adapt, but if you got a hundred people to try out with last year's flyer, keep it coming with very few additions. Of course if you built a new pool or won the state championship, say so. Just look familiar.
152. Use pictures of your coaches and your swimmers in ads. People are attracted to human photographs. Make sure they are having fun -- you're not recruiting swimmers from other teams; you're growing your own.
153. Always stress benefits to them. It doesn't mean as much to a parent or swimmer that you have three Ph.Ds and won the national championship forty three times if you don't care about them. Tell them what good things will happen to them if they tryout, join, and stay with the team. Focus on the word YOU, not the words US, I, or ME.
154. Establish a relationship with one swim vendor and ask for free promotional items -- Lots of team

leaders don't take advantage of their ability to negotiate this. It's in the swim supplier's best interest that you grow and keep your swimmers happy. Free T-shirts or swim caps for inter-squad meets is not a lot to ask if you are using one vendor to supply expensive suits, kick boards, buoys, goggles, etc. all year long for a hundred swimmers. If they won't negotiate, pick up the phone. Someone will. Again, make these items part of an annual plan. Order well in advance, and mix anticipation with surprise all through the year.

155. Go online and ask successful teams what they are doing to recruit new swimmers and keep the ones they have happy.
156. Put articles on your web site and make them available at your facility as to the superiority of swimming over most youth sports. You may find these in swimming magazines, but more likely find them in library research. It's worth the time. Share whatever you find with the entire swim community.
157. If you are successful, pass your success on to all the teams that could benefit from your marketing -- yes, even your local competitors. There are easily enough people in any community to fill each program to overflowing. If you are nervous that they are providing a better experience on another team, change yours. Even if you have less of a facility and water time, there may be lots of other advantages you can provide without ignoring or bad mouthing the other teams. If you are the best, that will eventually show. Just focus on service not only of your swimmers, but the entire swimming and non-swimming community. A true heart of service can't be faked and can't be shut on and off depending on the value that service brings to you.
158. Always strive to improve. People will see that, be excited by it, and be moved to join and strive to improve themselves.
159. Show you are in this for the long term. Post career plans, not just monthly calendars. Post a quadrennial calendar to help people see the real value of swimming is a lifetime of fitness. If you have a master's program, determine part of your success with your age group swimmers by how many of their parents are swimming. One of the best ways to keep parents from usurping your coaching efforts is to have them physically involved. You might build this into your family discount, just as the YMCA's and health clubs do. Frankly the team and coach bank accounts don't care that the money came from a world record holder or a recovering heart attack patient.
160. Compile a list of potential swimmers from your present swimmers. Have them give you their names, phone numbers, and addresses so you can have your recruitment committee put them on the mailing list. Consider direct calling with a polite inquiry at a reasonable time. You swimmers may be shy or the families may not take them seriously. Very few organizations care enough to call, and, if done right, even if they don't join they will remember they were invited and will tend to share in your success as a member of the community when they see your name in the paper.
161. Consider a direct call campaign wither by professionals who do this for a living or by your own team. Thomas Brothers and other map companies rent or sell lists of phone numbers by street address. Draw concentric circles around your pool or other target area, write a great and friendly script and call or have a company do it for you. Sure, someone may not like it, but if you can save just one kid from drowning or feeling as if he or she isn't part of the community, or from heart disease, etc. it's worth some negative criticism for calling without being invited to.
162. Make sure your annual marketing plan reflects the personality of your team. Choose those weapons of marketing which suit you.

163. Get a company to make custom team pencils with your team web address and local or 800 number on them. Make sure everyone in town has at least one.
164. Effective promotion must create ATTENTION, INTEREST, DESIRE, ACTION. Memorize those words and think about them as you design your team promotion.
165. Always be prepared to give examples and answer the questions: Who, what, where, why, when, how and how much. When doing a presentation at the pool, you should easily be able to call someone aside to tell your prospective swimmer and family what benefits there have been in his or her personal life because of his or her participation on your team. Find someone close to the age and experience of the prospect.
166. Practice interviewing your swimmers, even the masters. This is great quality control, like the little cards in restaurants asking how the service was and it prepares people to become evangelists for your team.
167. Have a box for anonymous opinions as to the service being provided by your team. Be prepared to hear things you don't like, and don't change each time you hear a discouraging word. But compare what people say you are doing with what your mission statement says. Encourage prospective customers to fill out the forms too.
168. Make your web site so interesting that people want to subscribe to your e-mailings and give them the opportunity to do so. Find articles on general health, fitness, leadership, character building, motivational psychology, mind and body connection, physical rehabilitation, moral development, international swimming and triathlons, child development, aging, fitness for life, etc. and post them on a weekly basis. Have a video of the week to show technique or to spur motivation, etc. Keep them coming back, and give them a reason to depend upon your service.
169. Have a team "store" where the community can buy your T-shirts, caps, goggles, towels. If it's good enough for pro teams, it's good enough for your local team. Over six million people swim at least once a week in the USA alone. You know more than anyone else in the community what equipment is best, and you certainly want your team name on everybody willing to wear it.
170. Make special caps for people who make your state meet, etc.
171. Make special State High School caps for high school teams. Ask the coach's permission to donate these to him or her. Try to negotiate your team name in small letters underneath the huge letters of the team. This can get sticky if swimmers from other teams represent the high school or if the relationships aren't strong between you and the high school program, but it's a great offer, even if it isn't used. Keep trying to find ways to support the other teams and coaches in your surrounding area. Over time your leadership will be respected and utilized.
172. Create a To-Do List for the promotion of your team. Then divide it into months and then into reasonable chunks for individual people. For example, in October you might want to have a team picture hand delivered to every city council and school board member. That would be something one person could do well. You could give this role to someone who doesn't have an official position on your team but who has a professional personality and a friendly countenance. As a leader, one of your most important roles is to ascertain people's individual gifts, strengths, and energy levels and then build roles for them to play in the promotion of your swim team.

173. If you don't have any news for the newspaper make some up! No, don't lie, but if you just took on an assistant coach or one of your board members just got back from an interesting business trip to Tokyo, or your team attendance has gone up twenty percent since your decision to run a training trip in Hawaii during Christmas break, make sure you write a great publicity release and send it to your friends at the newspaper.
174. Post a "fitness tip of the week" on your web site to give those people who are swimmers and non-swimmers one more good reason to return regularly.
175. If you have a particularly good test set, save it as a PDF or HTML and post it to your web site. Tell your swimmers to tell their friends and parents it's there.
176. Run a "Virtual Swim Meet" with a team across the country or around the world on-line. You can use Tropical Penguin's Cool Digital Swim Meet for this or save the results in other programs.
177. Make a big deal about college signings, even if it's just the local Junior College. If there is financial aid or a scholarship involved, don't be shy about giving the money value. People perk up when green is mentioned.
178. Make a big deal about how much top swimmers are being paid. Quote articles which mention the sponsorship of swimmers. This surprises people and makes for interesting reading, especially in towns where there are no professional sports teams.
179. Make swimming sound like the most exciting sport in the world and then do whatever you can to make your practices fun to watch, and fun to be involved in. When there are two ways to skin the training cat, use the way which is most fun and exciting to do and watch.
180. Practice being enthusiastic. One way to tell if you are successful is to listen to members of the team talk about swimming. If they sound really scientific and drab, they might have gotten that personality from you. If there are two ways to describe what's going on your team, choose the way that reflects the excitement of your heart. Sometimes coaches and parents over-stress the science of the sport in reaction to people who don't take the sport seriously.
181. With a smile on your face, challenge anyone who thinks they are better trained than your swimmers to a workout. Make it fun for them if they show up, and be sure, either way, to show them the same respect and admiration as you ask for from them. If they think it's not fun to swim, make that demonstration workout fun.
182. Once in while do something crazy like inner tube races, turbulence swims, etc. maybe you could do this ten minutes once a week.
183. Replaced "get out" swims which reinforce the idea that the goal is to get out of practice, with "stay in swims" which reinforce that practice is something to be coveted.
184. Do the right things and do things right. You will make mistakes, but retreat and re-work those mistakes when you do. You can't effectively push and publicize what isn't inherent in your heart and your program. For example, if you can recruit a swimmer from another team by putting down the coach or program of another team you take the risk of gaining a swimmer who isn't loyal. Focus on doing

the right things; planning, focusing on relationships, building the most positive environment and the do things right by making sure your backstroke flags are straight, your pace clocks are synchronized, your publicity is well done, on time, and honest. Principle-centered programs are as unique as they are attractive.

185. If you work out in a school facility, get to know the custodian and school secretaries. They are among the most powerful people on any campus. If the person taking care of your facility loves you, the water will be warmer, the gates will open on time, and life will be better for everyone involved. The more they know the better their answers when asked for assistance. So get them a newsletter, invite them and their spouses to your banquet and recognize them, etc.
186. Try to find someone close to teach your swimmers and others in leadership how to present their ideas verbally. Maybe you can get someone from Toastmasters, the Lyons Club, or the Rotary Club to give an hour presentation on how to speak to the press and to other groups of people. Require your older swimmers to go. The object is to learn to present your self and your team in the best light. Just because someone loves the team and loves swimming doesn't mean he or she knows how to verbalize that esteem. This will work for the good of the team, and for the lifelong good of the individual.
187. Schedule social trips to Sea World, Disneyland, etc. once a quarter and have a raffle for two free tickets for anyone who has made a certain amount of practices or recruited a certain number of new swimmers, etc.
188. Spend one day per month doing a thorough cleaning and restoration of your facility. Do things the custodian probably doesn't like polishing the chrome on the ladders or getting the tile clean in the pool and restrooms. Get your swimmers used to having pride in their facility and in working as a team. At first give them a list and tell them who is doing what. Gradually give this leadership to a popular swimmer. Take one of the lousiest jobs for yourself and treat it as an honor to do it. Teaching service isn't difficult and maintaining that paradigm gets easier as time goes on. Remember not to treat it as a penalty, but as something to look forward to. Leave something to do for those who might miss out. Make sure the custodian knows how much you care about his facility too.
189. Make value, not war. Don't worry if the team down the street charges less than you. Do things they are unable or unwilling to do. Offer one free lesson for anyone who makes minimum attendance or minimum time drops in test sets, for example. Have a list of advantages of your program over anyone else's. Remember who your competitors are. Price wars don't win much.
190. It might be useful to have a sheet comparing the prices of other international individual sports at your level. For example, it's not uncommon for an individual ice skater or gymnast to be paying over a thousand dollars a month for training. Sometimes much more. Know your competitors, and then get to know what other great teams around the world charge. And cheer when they charge more. You are a professional and you are providing a very very valuable service. It's also useful to do an hourly cost evaluation.
191. Due to very lax licensing requirements in swimming, just about anyone can start a team. It's very difficult for parents or masters swimmers to be able tell the difference in the quality and care of a team led by an empathic passionate and highly trained staff without guidance. Provide that guidance in a classy, but forthright way. If you or your coach has a master's degree or ten years of experience, say so. If you provide underwater filming, great travel, and help swimmers improve at a rate no competitor can match, say so. It's unfortunate that no governing body is publishing these statistics for you, but someone has to or the perceived value of a start-up team charging twenty bucks a month will make children

believe that they are getting the same service for a lower price. On the other hand, if a first year coach is helping swimmers improve at a faster rate or doing a better job of promoting himself or his or her club, get to work. Be great, be bold, and provide the best value. If not this morning, then by the end of the day! This, remember, is *competitive* swimming.

192. What can you do that no one else can? You may have many answers to this question that we haven't considered. One thing I can say is that acute injuries in swimming are very rare. There are occasional injuries in the racing start and people sometimes slip on the deck. Once in a while someone dives on someone. But these injuries are really rare compared to soccer, baseball, football. Also, *everyone plays* in swimming. That's not so in most other sports. And if everyone plays in baseball, there are often bad feelings about the compromises. In invitationals, everyone has a chance to be a winner, to improve to his or her best. And no one, no matter how fast they swim, can take away the improvement of any other swimmer. It uses the whole body, whereas, soccer and basketball tend to be more leg dominated. It's not putting these other sports down to show data on the advantages of swimming.
193. Do a little public cross training. Enter the team in an early season five kilometer fun run. Bicycle to some place twenty to fifty miles away and have cars meet the athletes with lunch. This gives you an opportunity to teach safety. If you have athletes who are in other sports too, learn all you can from them, and invite their team to a swim party where there is an exhibition of how to swim well and safely as well as a lot of fun.
194. If you mess up, forget to enter a swimmer in a meet, say something you shouldn't have, run too many really boring workouts in a row with little or no positive reinforcement, and you have a "customer" who is upset or leaves, ask him or her to tell you what she or he wants in a swim program. If you've done a good job of setting up a team that takes care of lots of types of swimmers, you may be able to get them back. One example of a "complete" program: Head coach Mark Schubert was sometimes too intense for very some of the very talented swimmers when his Mission Viejo Nadadores were at their peak. So he had a second senior group under Bud MacCalister, who later went on to coach Janet Evans to three world records. Bud's group wasn't as intense, and got some fine performances anyway. Mark's group was so good that you had to be able to final at the national championships even to be considered to join the forty people in the group, yet the team also had five hundred learn-to-swim kids in that program each summer. So, if you've done the groundwork, even if the swimmer can't handle one part of your program he or she may be happy in another part. As a businessperson, this is something you should plan, even if it isn't possible to institute it exactly as Mission did.
195. Take really good care of your home. How does this promote your team? You aren't your job. You aren't a swim coach. You are a human being who coaches swimming. People can tell the difference. Plan a social life outside of your professional life. Take care of your home, your family, your spiritual life and the most valuable part of the team, it's leader and keeper of the mission will remain strong, consistent, and maintain the balance and focus necessary to reach and maintain long-term success that leaves a valuable legacy. It's unfortunate how many coaches allow themselves to be sucked into the workaholic addiction, losing friends, family and missing out on the real joy of being so excellent at what they do. No coach on his or her death bed every said I wish I could work just one more hour. They remember the relationships, the family, the love they gave and accepted. And, the next day, someone else with a stopwatch and a dream takes over anyway. Jim Montrella, who has had an awesome career as a coach and an awesome marriage to Beverly for decades once told me that he takes every other Friday off to go somewhere with her and returns the favor to his assistants on the Fridays he works by letting them go for the three day weekend. A coach without a foundation of love at home never reaches his or her full potential and neither do his or her swimmers, and deep inside the city, school, or independent team

196. Someone once said he wished he could switch the salaries of lawyers and teachers. Wishing won't make it so. The more you are paid, the more value the community will give to your team and your influence. It's odd, but true. Add value, and get paid for adding value. Make it part of the team plan and don't apologize for it. The dentist and doctor are valuable. They solve problems once or twice a year. You build character and bodies every single day.
197. Put your team's recruitment and promotional success story on the web and tell every one where it is. Try with all your might to raise the level of the water for all swim teams and all leaders.
198. Ask questions of the most popular companies in your community as to how to become popular, how to run a successful organization, and, most relevant, how to attract and keep customers.
199. Choose great competitors, aim higher than you dare. You should choose your own Goliaths, but be fearless in choosing them. For Mark Schubert it was to take a team that had never scored at the nationals and win more national championships than any team or coach in history. For Dave Salo, it was to fly in the face of traditional over distance training and build a team around an under-distance philosophy in Irvine. For you, it might be to encourage ten thousand people to swim in a town of forty thousand. It's not the mission itself that has intrinsic value, but the passion with which you set it that encourages others to jump on and make it fly.
200. Project your life forward forty years. What has happened because you knew you could not fail? Were you willing to let go and find creative solutions to your challenge of awesome publicity and recruitment of swimmers? Are you indeed leaving a legacy having set an example as a leader of a team that built itself into an awesome and accountable service organization? Did you define what drives you, build a great family who felt your presence, knew what you stood for and saw your leadership in competitive swimming as only one important way you exemplified excellence? Now work backwards to this day and choose those things you will do today, tomorrow, this week, this month, this year and in all the years to follow to promote this sport and your community team. Find one, then two, then five and ten and twenty and a hundred people to take on each of these jobs. Pick up the phone, take out a calendar, make a list and get going. You have the call, and it is up to you to lead this quest, either in a small or a huge way. This is certainly going to be fun and it certainly is going to be rewarding, not only for those who get involved, but for you as well.
201. The transition from amateur coaches to professional leaders is only complete when you make building and maintaining the business and marketing a focal point of your team. If you truly love people and are an educated, talented coach, there is no better single focus you can bring your team than recruiting new people to join and then promoting their efforts once they do. When we proposed to USA Swimming back over nine years ago that we rate teams on the percentage improvement their member teams experienced, that fell on deaf ears. One of the great advantages of that measurement was that, in order to improve, swimmers had to keep swimming on that team. Of course the same is true of building your team. And deaf ears or not, the success of a coach's career and family relies on the economic success of your team. Bud Macalister, who coached Janet Evan to three world records once told me, after my own divorce that he believes over 90% of elite coaches are divorced or will never be married. The combination of a lack of financial success and a dedication to a vision that errantly excludes a focus on what matters most points to a great and immediate need for change.

Consider this great irony: If you build your team as a business, and the main measurement of your business is how it grows and how you keep your clients happy enough to stay on the team, don't your chances of putting someone on the national team improve? God makes talented swimmers and each community gets a few of them. But, coaches serve their communities by making swimming faster fun for as many members of that community as possible. If you really want to win some championships, relax, grow your team, and the talent will rise. I promise that you'll sleep a lot better with a waiting list of 500 to join your team.

Every CEO of every business has to leave his or her ego at the door at some point and simply allow great relationships run his company.

The service you have the option of providing is worth a six figure income. Not because you keep kids off the streets or even because you help kids get scholarships and teach them a lifelong skill that will keep them healthier than anything else. That's all true, of course, and maybe that's really why you do it, you noble people.

The bottom line is the bottom line. You are running a business or you are simply an amateur. If you accept the head coach role, you need to build your team, to lead whatever group hires you and whatever group you hire in a quest for constant marketing and internal and external growth.

In the future, we can certainly flesh out other foundational areas discussed in this article -- building and growing relationships, shifting budgets to better reflect our values, making workouts more interesting, fun, and effective, etc. In the meantime, take a look at your budget. If you aren't spending *at least* twenty percent on marketing, get with the program. Make the most important things the most important things.

Next month we'll regress a little and talk about how to set some goals, how to shrink the number of hours you spend on swimmers who aren't motivated and give those hours to a hundred more athletes who may be someday. We'll badger USA Swimming some more too. They have the power to help you and we pray they experience a paradigm shift. Even if they do develop more resources to assist in promoting your particular team, you've got to build your own ark, collect your own animals, and sail to your own mission-centered destinations.

I'm looking forward to hearing your comments, your creative ideas, and even your criticism. I'm really looking forward to your being able to raise a secure family on a coaching salary given to you by a wildly successful team you've built in your community.

Take care and may God bless you with the wisdom to shift you paradigm, and influence thousands of people to learn, live, laugh, train, and compete.

Steve Friederang  
Head Coach Tropical Penguin Swim Software





# Swimmers, Parents, and ALL Others Who Can Help Grow and Promote Our Swim Team

See completed examples at [www.competitiveswimmer.com](http://www.competitiveswimmer.com)

Tools/Leader (s)	Main Talent/Energy	Time available	Phone	e-mail

Use this template as a consolidated reference of the people who can assist the mission of optimal growth and promotion of the team. I know this sound funny, but leave no one out -- just leave a blank space if a parent, swimmer, city council member, etc. isn't doing anything. Post this list as well as your list of things that need to get done. If something needs to get done, a flyer needs to be printed and distributed, a mailing needs to be organized, posters need to get made, business cards to get passed out, etc. almost anyone can do those things, so the opportunity is open. Develop the attitude that people who aren't involved are missing out. That said, do your best as a leader to give people applicable things to do. Some parents travel a lot and can only take short gigs. There are many things to do that don't last long -- hospitality at a meet, for example, or ten phone calls to local businesses, etc. Other people like almost daily tasks. Know who they are and match them to your more long-term promotional goals. The challenge is to **get everyone doing something** so everyone feels a part of the team and growth and promotional goals get and stay met.

## Appendix

Next month we'll also talk about how to make swimming as fun as AYSO soccer must be or little league, or even NCAA basketball and football. We'll talk about how to compete with the big boys by playing a more exciting game when the public is watching. Maybe USA Swimming will listen to that too, though they might not act, since they will lose a lot of money if a high percentage of teams refuse to run huge invitationals in their present boring format.

From Pecos River:

The purpose of a swim team is to successfully solve the problems of its customers

The commitment and loyalty of the individual worker is critical to the success of solving the problems of customers now and in the future

The role of leaders is to;

Grow the commitment, loyalty, skills, knowledge, and understanding of the people in the organization;

Free up and focus the maximum amount of people-energy on the right tasks.

A swim team is not the pool, the meets, the budget, or the pace clock. It is the people, their energy, relationships, time, ideas, and resourcefulness.

“Specialization is for insects” Robert Heinlein

Environments of fear, anxiety, and insecurity create anger. Environments where individuals are treated as commodities generate apathy and mere compliance.

If your goal is to be a successful coach of competitive swimmers, you have to take your own bull by its horns. You cannot rely on USA Swimming, your NGB outside the U.S., ASCA, your local LSC to take the responsibility to promote your “business”. Many of us think these organizations could or should do more, but as the Confucius saying goes: “Man may stand with mouth open for long time before roast duck will fly in mouth!”

So begin to treat your swim team as a company. This is what I suggest and what the over twenty products and services of my company supports:

1. Calculate the average seasonal and annual time improvement of your own athletes.
2. Calculate the average seasonal and average improvement of the athletes on at least the top ten teams in your own LSC.
- 3 Post those numbers here and compare to the other 55 LSC's in America.
4. Find those numbers for other countries and compare them.
5. Now set a goal for improvement in average improvement.
6. Now make a plan, explain that plan to everyone with a stake in the outcome of that plan and get to work.

The Work:

1. Empower, don't manage, each swimmer to reach his or her own goals to manifest individual as well as the corporate team mission.
2. Encourage and reinforce creativity, but measure and publish results of all creative efforts. Creatively lead the accounting.
3. Publish results daily if possible. The web is ideal for this.
4. Hold yourself accountable too.
5. Grow – take lessons, etc. yourself, not just to demonstrate how hard you work, but how to commit to a lifetime of growth and purpose.
6. Encourage each swimmer to take private lessons as often as possible and make it possible, even if you have to send swimmers outside your team to get those lessons.

7. Find, help build, and reinforce with enthusiasm the specialists you will need to provide the best environment for your swimmers. Even though you may be a genius in each area, the experts you surround yourself with in biomechanics, motivational psychology, physiology, business, public relations, etc. are what will make your team fun to coach, fun to race, and rewarding for everyone, including you. Subjugate ego for the mission and become the team's most vocal cheerleader. Even Christ had twelve disciples -- don't let your fear that no one can do it as well as you keep you from having a balanced happy family and an awesome job too. We workaholics can and should save one another from the lameness of our hormones. (:

8. Reinforce with unlimited passion *only* those actions which move athletes and the team toward its mission.