# Table of Contents

Table of Contents ......................................................................................................................... 2

Executive Summary ....................................................................................................................... 3

Content Areas ................................................................................................................................. 5

  Marketing ................................................................................................................................. 5

  Finance .................................................................................................................................. 7

  Law ........................................................................................................................................ 10

  Administration ...................................................................................................................... 13

References .................................................................................................................................... 18

Appendix: Recruiting Manual ........................................................................................................ 20
Executive Summary

Coaching has many facets that make up the job itself. Recruiting is one of the most important in that it is how a team is built for the future. This recruiting manual is intended to consolidate, in one location, every piece of information needed to successfully recruit and have a functioning cross country/track team at Ball State. The manual would be a place a coach could refer to if they had questions or concerns about recruiting for our program.

With the popularity in sports growing, marketing is very important for teams, companies, sponsors and consumers. Sports marketing uses sports, in any form, to help sell goods and services. There are many ways different types of marketing strategies are performed. In my position as a coach, I am continually marketing myself, the university, the program, and the culture at Ball State University. Marketing can be difficult for programs such as cross country and track teams because they do not attract the same interest as other sports. It can be hard to stand out in the crowd, especially a smaller school like Ball State, so we have to get creative with how we market and to whom we market.

We market Ball State and the cross country and track program using social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Each one of these platforms is geared to a specific audience. I have to break down our recruiting through market segmentation and then specifically target those within. I then position our recruiting in a way that we think those we’ve targeted would see most appealing. I also market myself as a coach every time I attend a meet to recruit and interact with athletes and their parents. Within the recruiting manual I will break down who, what and how we recruit the specific target market for Ball State.

Finances play a huge part in recruiting for any type of athletic program. Our budget as a whole is determined by our Athletic Director and allows us to be competitive and successful. For
cross country specifically, I am given an amount to work with each fall, and I can disperse it how I like among travel, meets, etc. For Ball State Cross Country and Track we are fully funded in scholarships, which allows us to recruit in a way to focus on specific event groups and be successful. Within the manual I will also touch on non-athletic types of financial aid that help with recruiting.

As a coach at a NCAA institution, there are recruiting rules and guidelines that we must stick to. Recruiting violations are the most common violation among programs. There are certain times of the year that we can and cannot recruit. We can and cannot talk to prospective student-athletes depending on their age. We also have rules to follow on what we can and cannot do on different types of visits or evaluations with athletes. This manual will provide that information as well as touch on why the recruiting rules are important in a way that maintains competitive balance.

Running fast and winning is fun, but if a program cannot function effectively it makes it hard for many within. The administrative duties of coaching and running a program can oftentimes be harder than the day to day details of a practice. At Ball State our staff structure is small, so work has to be delegated appropriately. How we manage our personnel in the recruiting process is something we pride ourselves in at Ball State. We are strategic with recruiting in a way to be able to get our whole staff involved. Another part of recruiting is finding the right athlete to fit into the culture of the program that is building. Part of doing that is making sure they fit within the leadership style and decision-making skills of the coach. Having a leader who understands the four functions of management keeps a program progressing forward. Within my manual I will showcase my style of coaching and how it has been beneficial in my recruiting so far at Ball State.
Content Areas

Marketing

Marketing is a significant section of this manual because of coaches having to market themselves, the school, team, and the culture on why prospective student-athletes should come to Ball State University. Market segmentation seeks to analyze a market’s population to identify segments of consumers to tailor products and branding in a way that is attractive to the group. Markets can be segmented in several ways such as geographically, demographically, or behaviorally. Market segmentation allows a company to focus its resources on efforts that can be the most profitable (Tarver, 2019). How market segmentation works with recruiting is very similar. With recruiting we segment the population of prospective student-athletes in order to target who we want to market and then decide how we are going to market. At Ball State we target females specifically because we do not have a men’s program. We then break down our markets more specifically into senior females from the Midwest. Those Midwest states are Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Kentucky, and a few others. Typically, our target is middle class, blue collar families. We find that families with these characteristics are more receptive to the type of university Ball State is. We have a certain type of athlete academically that we stick to when it comes to recruiting. Athletes who are in good academic standing help themselves because they will most likely earn some academic scholarship. We also know the transition for them will not be as difficult because they are good students. A target market could be compared to a university like Ball State finding its “niche” when it comes to recruiting. When a coach knows their target market well, it could save a lot of time and energy down the road in recruiting.
Positioning refers to the ability to influence consumer perception regarding a brand or product relative to competitors (“Market Positioning - Creating an Effective Positioning Strategy”, 2015). The objective of positioning is to establish the image or identity of a brand or product so that consumers perceive it in a certain way. Our competitors are other schools in Indiana such as Butler, Indiana University, Purdue and Purdue Fort Wayne to name a few. We also compete with the other MAC schools frequently for recruits. As coaches at Ball State we have to identify our “brand” to recruits and families to be perceived in a positive way. If we do this well we will recruit better than other programs. Positioning can be implemented in few different ways. With the cross country and track team we can associate our team, which is our product, with certain beneficial value. Those values can be a great education, great support and coaching by our staff, teammates who value hard work and the opportunity to compete at a high level. Our staff at Ball State takes a very close look at competitive pricing when it comes to our product. Any offer that we give out in the recruiting process has a value put on it. Do we expect this athlete to come in and help right away, or are they going to be someone who develops over time. If they are looking at other schools in our conference we have to be competitive with the offer and market why Ball State is the better choice. We also want to make sure our product is high quality. Over the last two seasons our distance program, specifically, has gotten better. We have shown that we can compete with any team in our conference and many other teams across the country. Any recruit would be joining a high-quality team in pursuit for championships. Another strategy within positioning is making consumers think that your product is better than your competitors. That’s why it is important to treat every recruit and every conversation you have with respect because you don’t know who the message will be passed on to. You don’t want other programs to hear about how a recruit wasn’t treated well or didn’t feel like they were
valued. It is so important to go above and beyond when marketing your program to stand out from competitors.

Another form of marketing that we do is through social media. With an alumni base all over the country it is a way to connect with those who were involved in the program. It also is a great recruiting tool to share stats, facts and results about the team at any given point of the year. We do this on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Facebook has been our most successful way in reaching our older audience of alumni and parents who follow the program. Instagram is a way to directly connect with recruits or local high school programs and coaches. During the recruiting process if it is not possible to get in contact with a high school coach or anyone at the school, I have found that you can reach out to the prospect directly on Instagram. Our staff has found Twitter is a good mix of people connecting with us on social media. As a staff we typically work together at meets to get videos, pictures and results to put up live for our audience to follow along. Any content we can market about our program athletically and academically can be found on multiple levels of social media frequently.

Finance

Among the three NCAA divisions, Division I schools generally have the biggest student bodies, manage the largest athletics budgets and offer the most generous number of scholarships (NCAA, 2020). The financial budget of a program determines a lot about how teams are structured. Here at Ball State, each team’s budget is determined by our Athletic Director, Beth Goetz. This is an example of centralized budgeting. Centralized budgeting requires all decision-making powers to be in the hands of upper level administration (“6 Alternative Budget Models for Colleges and Universities”, 2018). Another reason to implement centralized budgeting is that some expenses are necessary to the basic functioning of divisions, and are therefore not optional.
With the cost of higher education increasing as well as the cost of college athletics, many universities are moving to a more incentive based budget model. Incentive-based budgeting focuses on aligning funding resources with activity levels. Increases in activity levels result in increased unit funding while decreased activity levels results in decreased funding (“University of Colorado Denver, 2020”). Campus wide, Ball State is slowly shifting to this budget model.

The total athletic budget for Ball State in 2018 was $28,443,728 (College Athletics Financial Information, 2018). At the beginning of the fiscal year, Beth Goetz lets each Head Coach know what their program budget is. This may be new for some coaches as previous Athletic Directors did not have budget meetings. When my boss first got here four years ago he had to manage the budget on his own with not much guidance. There were not many conversations with supervisors on how to manage three separate sports. Brian Etelman, current Head Cross Country and Track coach at Ball State shared his thoughts on budgeting. Last year was the first year he had a sit-down meeting with an Athletic Director at Ball State to go over budget. Beth also asked for a “wish list” of items for the program that would help us continue to strive for excellence (B. Etelman, personal communication, March 16, 2020). Within that budget, it is broken down within operational and scholarship costs. Some examples of operational costs are travel, which includes hotels, buses, flights and meals, equipment such as uniforms, training shoes, and spikes, or any facility equipment like pole vault standards, high jump pits, hurdles, and different training devices. When organizing operational travel plans we look at each meet and make sure it will match what we are looking to accomplish within a reasonable budget. We try to keep costs down in every possible way without cutting the athletes short of anything. Since cross country, indoor track and outdoor track are three different seasons, we break our budget down at a smaller level into cross country and track. In my role as Associate Head Coach of
Cross Country and Track, my boss allows me to decide what to do with the cross-country portion of the budget. I am given an amount that seems necessary to be competitive and successful. As we grow into a consistent competitive program I need to make sure we are at meets that match our competitive standard. Luckily in the Midwest we typically do not have to travel far to meet those needs. One cost that varies year to year is the decision to have an off campus cross country camp every other year. Years that we decide to go away for a week, we have to be a bit more budget savvy throughout the season. Years that we stay in Muncie for preseason camp may allow us to take a bigger trip to a competition during the season.

Scholarships are another part of the financial budget that is very important to teams. Earning a scholarship can be one of the greatest achievements for an athlete. Cross country and track are an equivalency sport, which means there are no restrictions on how many athletes can be on scholarship (“Why You Need to Know the Difference Between Head-Count and Equivalency Scholarships”, 2001). Our staff allocates our budgets for scholarships according to areas in which we do well in. The areas we do well in depends on the event specific coaching staff the program has, and the success of that group. We also allocate to areas based on success and failures of the MAC conference. Knowing that the conference as a whole does really well in the distance events gives confidence in a coach that you can invest money in the athletes and get points out of them as well. We also want to focus on potential return in investment. When recruiting athletes, we look at how versatile the athlete is going to be. We have to think if we are putting big money in an athlete, are they going to do just one event or multiple events? For distance runners they have a range and can potentially run 800m to 10,000m, as well as relays. Sprinters are similar in that they can run multiple sprint events and various relays indoors and outdoors. Very technical events such as field events or throws you don’t get as much out of those
athletes. It is important to think of this in the recruiting process so you can spread your money and get more bang for your buck. Coach Etelman has done this incrementally. The program he took over five years ago had focuses in different events groups than we currently do. Over the span of those five years he has had to slowly move funds around to shift the layout of the program. The improvement over those years has been drastic and proven it is successful for the Cross Country and Track and Field program. Overall, the majority of our operational and scholarship budget is centered towards winning a conference championship in cross country and track with mostly distance and mid distance runners and sprinters.

**Law**

There are many different types of law that impact the sports industry. Contract law, trademarks, personal injury and criminal law are examples. All NCAA institutions, coaches and athletes feel the impact of sports law as they have to comply with rules and regulations and Title IX laws set by governing authorities. These regulations involve anything from equal opportunities to banned substances, practice schedules and the health and safety of student-athletes. The mission of the Ball State University Athletics Compliance Office is to uphold the rules and regulations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Mid-American Conference (MAC) and Ball State University (BSU); to monitor the processes and activities associated with such rules and regulations; and to educate institutional staff members, student-athletes and external constituents regarding such rules, regulations, processes and activities (Ball State Athletics, 2020).

Title IX has shaped college sports into what they are today. Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 is a federal law that states “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to
discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (NCAA, 2020). The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education enforces Title IX. For an institution to be compliant with Title IX it must meet one of three tests, 1. Provide participation opportunities for women and men that are substantially proportionate to the respective rates of enrollment of full-time undergraduate students; 2. Demonstrate a history and continuing practice of program expansion for the underrepresented sex; 3. Fully and effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex.

A continuing issue within Title IX that is somewhat controversial is gender proportionality. Ball State currently sponsors 19 sports, 12 women’s sports and 7 men’s sports. The university also enrolls proportionally more females with the student-athlete population 46% males, and 54% females. Within those 19 sports, indoor track and outdoor track are two separate sports, with the same coaching staff. Distance runners who run cross country, indoor track and outdoor track are counted as three athletes, competing in three different sports. Universities are inflating their women’s sports rosters, which results in high female participation numbers. Schools that have football tend to not have men’s sports with similar numbers so they can meet Title IX compliance. Are large rosters actually taking away the opportunity for females to compete? In track, for example, there are many meets with entry limits of three athletes per event per school. The result is the majority of the roster is left at home. Another interesting piece to this topic is financial aid. The Office of Civil Rights inexplicably instructs institutions to use unduplicated rather than duplicated participation in computations for scholarship equity (Gurney, Lopiano & Zimbalist, 2017). Women’s sports are being supported financially in a different way than they are being counted.
There are many rules when it comes to recruiting that a coach must follow beginning with phone conversations with underclassmen, all the way until the National Letter of Intent (NLI) is signed. A common mistake that is made by coaches when recruiting is talking to recruits during evaluation or dead periods. An evaluation period is when a college coach may watch college-bound student-athletes compete, visit their high schools, and write or telephone student-athletes or their parents. However, a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents off the college’s campus during an evaluation period (NCAA, 2020). During a dead period, a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents and may not watch student-athletes compete or visit their high schools. Coaches may write and telephone student-athletes or their parents during a dead period (NCAA, 2020). To keep the all the dates in check during the recruiting season, it is recommended to keep a recruiting calendar on hand. I personally keep a copy of the recruiting calendar by my desk and refer to it before scheduling any type of visit.

Another mistake that seems to happen more recently is recruiting infractions involving impermissible benefits. Examples of impermissible benefits are tickets to college or professional sporting events, a special discount, payment arrangement or credit on a purchase or service, cash or loan or signing or co-signing of a loan, transportation, payment of expense or loan of any automobile, benefits or gifts based upon the student-athlete’s athletic performance, and free or reduced rent or housing. In September, Georgia Tech basketball received a post season ban for a mistake made years ago. Head Coach Josh Pastner’s former friend, Ron Bell, identified by the NCAA as a "representative of the institution's athletic interests," was said to have provided more than $2,000 in impermissible benefits to players in 2016 and 2017 (Smith, 2019). An impermissible benefit is something as simple as giving a student-athlete a ride across campus. At
Ball State we pride ourselves on having our student-athletes and staff follow the rules. The consequences are not worth it when it compromises the whole program and being able to do one’s job.

Administration

Looking at the administrative side, there are more moving pieces that go into coaching and running a program that many do not see. It is much more than just showing up to practice every day and putting athletes through a run or workout. Administratively how a team is staffed is the foundation of how a team functions. Gilbert and Trudel (2005) showed that because of coaches’ long-term experience and athletic success in the past, it does not necessarily translate to effective coaching. Although I think this is a very important characteristic of being a successful coach, it is not always true. At Ball State, we currently only have two full time coaches on staff, both of whom were Division 1 college athletes. The head coach has to decide which event groups he wants to focus on and structure the staff accordingly. How we are set up right now is a full-time sprints and hurdle coach and a distance coach. That puts a lot of responsibility on these two individuals to have success in their event groups. Recruiting in those event groups is also very important because the program investment is in these athletes to take the program to the next level. We need to get the most out of our athletes during their four years here, so recruiting the right kids is advantageous. Ball State is at a slight disadvantage with how we are structured and are the only team in the Mid-American Conference like it. Being a single gender program and given our budget, we are the only school that has only two full time coaches. Because of this there is little room for error on the administrative side of keeping the program together. No program is perfect, but this is something we have been fighting for that we know benefits the whole program.
The four functions of management are very important to coaching. Effectively planning, organizing, being able to motivate and constantly evaluating peers and student-athletes is critical to success (Chelladurai, 2014). There are many hours that coaches put into planning, whether that be their season, training or recruiting. As a coach I plan out how I want my season to be structured and what we need to accomplish and schedule our races around that. I then look at the whole year, break it up into my three seasons and break each season up into smaller segments when I am planning training for the team. Within that I typically have to individualize the training to match what different athletes can handle. Planning is constantly happening with recruiting as well. As a coach I have to think about what meets am I going to see the most athletes and have an opportunity to talk with them. When we are planning official or unofficial visits with athletes, how are we going to structure the visit to showcase our school and team in the best way possible. Not every visit is the same for each recruit, so I have to plan based on interests of the recruit and match them with someone on the team I think they would mesh with well.

Organizing can be a huge strength for a coach, and what I think is a fun part of coaching. Once a plan is set, goals can be established and communicated in a way that student-athletes can be excited about and buy into. I do this on a weekly basis by sending training out so we can accomplish our goal for the week, which ultimately gets us closer to the season goal. When I am organizing with recruiting I find it best to have a list and constantly update it as a specific season goes on. I do this when I am in the beginning stages of recruiting. Once I have established who I want to recruit I constantly communicate with them on information and paperwork needed for a visit. I then create, organize and provide a detailed itinerary for both official and unofficial visits.
At Ball State we pride ourselves on being organized with good communication during visits to set us apart from other programs that don’t pay attention to the fine details.

Evaluations of myself, my student-athletes and recruits are constantly being done in the coaching field. Cross country and track are very objective because the results are what you see on paper. In a race you either beat people, or you didn’t. Evaluations are good because they yield conversations on what athletes and coaches can work on to get better. You can pin down specific objectives in racing, coaching or recruiting that can be improved. A good evaluation will provide the information needed to make better decisions in the future. After the indoor season my boss sits me down for a one on one staff evaluation. This is time to reflect on my work and vocalize what I would have done differently or done the same. He challenges me with tough questions but that critical thinking is making me a better coach.

Another important trait for a coach to have is being able to lead. I have to be able to connect with recruits and athletes and sell that I am going to lead them to success under my coaching. It is important to know the difference between transactional and transformational leadership, and when to properly use them. Transactional leadership focuses on the role of supervision, organization, and group performance. Leaders who implement this style focus on specific tasks and use rewards and punishments to motivate followers (Cherry, 2020). Being part of a collegiate athletic team, members are required to follow teams’ rules and expectations. Within those rules and expectations, performances by athletes can be rewarded or punished in various ways. Maybe they don’t travel to the next meet if they perform poorly, or maybe if they are continuously performing well they get to travel to a bigger meet somewhere as a reward. This type of leadership is effective if a program has a long history of being successful, and a winning culture is already in place.
The opposite, transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate. Not only are these leaders concerned and involved in the process; they are also focused on helping every member of the group succeed as well (Cherry, 2020). When I first began coaching at Ball State I used transformational leadership more frequently. I walked into a program that needed change and a new outlook on training and competing. I had to change the culture of the group and what I expected from athletes daily. I needed a process-based outlook on training. I also had to change the message that I was sending to athletes I was recruiting to help transform the program. I didn’t want athletes who wanted to come into a program and never get better individually or as a team. I needed athletes who were self-motivated and excited about being a part of something bigger than themselves and being part of a team that would rise up from the bottom. Finding the right athletes to buy into your vision and accept your message takes many leadership skills. As a program progresses, like Ball State has done in a short amount of time, both transactional and transformation leadership will be used.

Charismatic leadership is referred to as the perceptions of members that a leader possesses some extraordinary gifts and talents (Chelladurai, 2014). I believe my talents and experience as a Division 1 athlete are displayed in this leadership. Not all coaches know the experience of what it is like to be recruited and being a student-athlete during one of the most important times in life. I use this as a selling point when I am speaking with recruits and selling my vision of the program with my current student-athletes. I want those athletes to know the reason why I am recruiting them is because of the confidence I have in their abilities. I am competitive, and I want my athletes to perform to the best of their ability. When I have confidence in them, they will have confidence in themselves. Having the charisma to confidently address and lead individuals also develops over time.
Coaching at the Division I level has definitely allowed me to expand in various forms of decision making. There are days when I make decisions on my own, days I seek opinions from mentors and even days I lean on input from the athletes I coach. Any given day can result in a different scenario, good or bad to decide. There are various forms of decision-making processes that have been researched. The Vroom-Yetton Model suggests that it is important to balance the costs associated with the time it takes to come to a participative decision, with the benefits of allowing member participation (Chelladurai, 2014). It could especially be useful in new or unusual situations. This model allows multiple resources to be used to make sure the decision is high quality and in a collaborative way with a team. I believe it is important to include group participation in the decision-making process when appropriate because they are part of the process of a team getting better. There may be situations that as a coach you need information from others to solve a problem. Getting feedback from athletes on how a workout went or how they felt can help set up training and coaching workouts in the upcoming weeks. A huge part of success is athletes believing in the goals set by themselves and their coaches. Team members' buy-in to the decision is important to the Vroom-Yetton Model. Some other ways I consult with student-athletes is in weekly individual meetings. This gives me an opportunity to address a question or issue and get an honest answer. I can also pose a situation or question to the group and help facilitate a decision we can all agree on. There may be times when I use the information I already have from members of my team and make the final decision without any other input. Throughout the year this is my approach to majority of the training I put together. As I continue to move upward in my coaching career, each university I am at will be different. My decision-making skills will broaden, staff structures may look different and my leadership skills will vary.
References


Appendix

The Recruiting Manual may be viewed as an attachment/supplement to this paper.