



BRINGING RISK MANAGEMENT TO LIFE WITHIN YOUR NATIONAL SPORT ORGANIZATION

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The True Sport Secretariat is pleased to recognize its longstanding relationship with the Sport Law & Strategy Group; a consulting firm specializing in values based-planning, risk management, strategic communications, governance and legal issues. The authors of this document, Dina Bell-Laroche and Rachel Corbett, have years of practical experience in helping sport organizations better understand and deal with the issues that prevent them from achieving their full potential.

Background

Managing risks entails more than simply taking steps to stop bad things from happening. We like to say that risk management done well is risk

management done by everyone, all the time. This is a tall order! Achieving this requires a change of culture and attitudes. Melanie Lockwood-Herman, the Executive Director of the Non-Profit Risk Management Centre in the United States, says *“Risk management isn’t about policies, procedures and training – it’s about creating a culture that supports risk awareness”*. As such, a risk management program does not take shape overnight – rather, it may require years of concerted effort to create the organizational culture that makes smart risk management possible.

The ideas set out in this document are not prescriptive – in other words, it is not our intention to chart a path that every NSO must follow. Each organization is different and will need to move forward at its own pace. Smaller organizations may be at an advantage as they can communicate more directly and easily with their members. Conversely, larger organizations may be at an advantage because they have greater capacity and access to resources. The point is that there are many ingredients that go into any successful change initiative, and the recipe for change will vary from one organization to the next.

This document is a companion piece to the resource “Your NSO’s Risk Management Program”. It provides ideas, action steps and timelines that your NSO can follow to implement the risk management program described in the companion document.

Phase Descriptions

Based on our research and experience with the Risk Management Project¹, we believe there are five phases that a NSO moves through after it completes the risk assessment workshop. They are:

Early phase – this is the phase immediately following the risk assessment workshop, when the NSO considers which existing and new practices and ideas are worth pursuing (*Year 1*)

Middle phase – this is the phase where some of the early efforts begin to bear fruit, and the NSO begins to build upon the early successes to create more sustainable risk management practices. (*Year 2-3*)

Integrated phase – this is the phase where risk management measures become more fully integrated into the NSO’s policies, plans, actions and decisions. (*Year 3+*)

Maintenance phase – this is the phase where risk management initiatives and actions become the stuff of everyday life. But it is important not to take success for granted! Risk management requires a sustained and continuous effort. (*Year 4-5*)

Renewal phase – this is the phase where the NSO pauses to take stock and evaluate their approach to managing risk. What should we continue (because it’s working)? What should we stop (because it’s not working)? What new things should we start (innovative ideas we perhaps have never considered!)? (*Year 5+*)

The above cycle might then repeat itself, because the renewal phase might lead NSO leaders into a whole new period of trying and mastering new and more innovative approaches for integrating risk management into the fabric of their organizations.

¹ The Risk Management Project is a national initiative supported by the True Sport Secretariat and coordinated by the Sport Law & Strategy Group to help National Sport Organizations manage their risks more effectively. The Project involves a two day workshop that builds the participants’ understanding of key risk management principles and captures the identified risks in a risk registry.

Functional Areas

As we have emphasized at the beginning of this document, effective risk management is very dependent on organizational culture. As a result, we think that a useful framework for organizing potential risk management initiatives is those **functional** areas of the NSO's activities and operations. Every NSO will pursue specific strategies depending on their circumstances, and should design and deliver their sport-specific programs in ways that appropriately reduce, transfer and avoid significant risks. However, common across all organizations would be these major **functions** which entail important risks management components:

Policy development – what are the policies, rules, standards and expectations that the NSO sets for itself and its members?

Education – these are the concerted efforts to educate and raise awareness among members, participants, volunteers, leaders and staff

Communications – what do we do to inform and engage our members and our partners?

Human resources management – how do we ensure the right people, supported with the right training, skills and tools, are in place?

Business practices – these are measures to improve everyday tasks, activities and management systems.

By combining these two aspects (phases of implementation over time, and functional areas) we have created a matrix showing many different options for implementing your risk management program. These options are presented as a menu from which choices can be made, depending on your circumstances and your readiness to embrace change. It is also important to note that some of the most effective risk management strategies require little or no financial investment, and minimal volunteer and staff time. In other words, risk management does not need to be expensive, but it does need to be well-planned and communicated.

Phase Template

	Policy Development	Education	Communications	HR Management	Business Practices
Early Phase (Year 1)	Approve a Risk Management Policy and make a formal commitment to creating a risk management program.	Provide a general presentation on risk management to members at your next AGM: consider making it a plenary session, so all delegates can attend.	Communicate your commitment to risk management to your members by letting them know what you have learned and what you might be doing over the next year.	Prepare written position descriptions for all key staff and volunteer positions. Review your volunteer/staff screening program (or if you do not screen people using police checks, conduct a feasibility analysis to determine if you should).	Prepare an inventory of existing business contracts and assess risks associated with these contracts. Introduce a risk management perspective into routine discussions at regular board meetings.

	Policy Development	Education	Communications	HR Management	Business Practices
Middle Phase (year 2-3)	<p>Conduct a policies audit to ensure policies are sound from a risk perspective.</p> <p>Ensure the policies noted in Appendix F of the Risk Management Guide are up-to-date.</p>	<p>Provide more in-depth professional development sessions on risk management at AGM and related conferences.</p> <p>Encourage PSOs to pursue risk management activities, and provide guidance and resources where appropriate (including webinar tools, key manuals such as the LegaciesNow resource)</p>	<p>Develop a crisis communications plan to better manage emergency issues should they arise.</p> <p>Develop a NSO communications plan for risks that maps out who needs to know what, by when, and how. This may help you reduce the likelihood of certain communications risks arising.</p> <p>Prepare a ‘key messages’ statement following every board meeting that can be used to communicate with members.</p>	<p>Include risk management responsibilities in job descriptions for key volunteers and staff.</p> <p>Consider introducing a risk management/safety award or other form of recognition to recognize individuals who embrace risk-thinking.</p> <p>Encourage and support staff in pursuing more specialized risk management training through their own professional development programs.</p> <p>Implement appropriate screening program using police checks.</p>	<p>Establish a clear protocol for management of all contracts (who reviews, when external advice is sought, who executes, steps to be taken before terminating contracts).</p> <p>Make risk management a standing agenda item for board meetings – use this time for quick review of risk registry, brainstorm to identify emerging risks and possible solutions.</p> <p>Undertake individualized risk assessments as part of the planning for major hosted events.</p>

	Policy Development	Education	Communications	HR Management	Business Practices
Integration Phase (Year 3+)	<p>Review all organizational policies for risk exposure.</p> <p>Commit to updating all policies on a regular schedule (this can be done on a staggered basis, for example, one-third of policies each year so that all policies are updated on a three year rotation).</p>	<p>Prepare customized risk management resources for distribution to member clubs.</p> <p>Review Risk Management Program Guide and customize to your NSO's needs.</p>	<p>Risk, liability and insurance issues are communicated regularly to members.</p> <p>Spokespeople are trained to deal with crises in both official languages.</p> <p>Communicate your values externally and look for ways to embed them in your communications' efforts.</p>	<p>Include risk management metrics in employee performance reviews to recognize/reward risk thinking and risk management behaviours.</p> <p>Ensure all employees and contractors have written contracts that have been professionally reviewed.</p> <p>Provide leadership and standards to support PSOs in their screening efforts.</p> <p>Follow established protocols for all recruitment, selection, hiring and termination of employees and contractors.</p>	<p>Develop a closer relationship with the NSO's insurance broker – he/she participates in AGM, makes presentations to board and to members on a regular basis.</p> <p>Ensure all key business decisions include a risk assessment analysis.</p> <p>Risk analysis is incorporated in the development of the NSO's strategic planning framework and operational plans.</p> <p>Conduct an inventory and audit of all intellectual property resources using a risk analysis approach.</p>

	Policy Development	Education	Communications	HR Management	Business Practices
Maintenance Phase (Year 4-5)	Monitor external environment and practices of other NSOs to identify any areas where policies might need fine-tuning and updating.	Ensure that educational opportunities are being provided on a regular basis for volunteer leaders, NSO staff, and members of PSOs and clubs.	<p>Communicate your NSO's commitment to managing risk through news features in your member newsletters, e-news bulletins or on your web site.</p> <p>Invite members to share what risks are keeping them awake at night, and work with them to find appropriate solutions.</p>	Conduct surveys among staff, key committees and board leaders to solicit ideas for possible improvements to the risk management process.	Ensure that your staff and key volunteers are monitoring their performance against stated objectives and asking themselves questions such as: "what are the obstacles to achieving our objectives?", "what opportunities might we be missing?", "what could we do differently to promote success?"
Renewal Phase (Year 5+)	Review your risk management policy.	<p>Consider what other educational activities you might do to increase your sport's capacity to manage risk?</p> <p>Ask yourself how well you are doing relative to other NSOs.</p>	Assess how well your NSO communicated its' risk management efforts over the past few years.	Ask your key volunteers and staff whether they feel they have the knowledge and support they need to manage risks effectively.	<p>Consider what other business practices you could be embracing to make your organization better.</p> <p>Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment workshop.</p>