



INSIGHT PACK

MARKETING SPORT TO WOMEN AND GIRLS

INTRODUCTION

AIM

This guide shares Women in Sport's latest advice on how best to market sport to your target audience. It explains the behaviour change journey and how effective marketing can encourage women and girls to take up your physical activity or sport offer. Developing the right messaging and distributing information through appropriate channels are key to engaging women and girls with sport.

Through our research into [Puberty](#) and [Menopause](#) we have developed an understanding on how significant life stages affect the attitudes of women and girls towards sport. In our publications, ['What Sways Women to Play'](#) and ['Reframing Sport for Girls'](#), we investigate motivations and opportunities that would influence women and girls to engage in sport.

The knowledge we have derived from this extensive research, as well as examples from the sector, can inform your approach to marketing sport to women and girls

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SUMMARY OF MARKETING PROCESS

1. DEFINING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

- Identifying your audience
- The behaviour change journey
- Understanding the motivations of your audience and the people who influence them

2. DESIGNING CONTENT THAT REACHES AND ENGAGES YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

- Considerations for your content
- Identifying the most appropriate channels
- Key take-aways and good practice
- Case studies

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The background consists of several overlapping triangles in various shades of purple and blue, creating a dynamic, geometric pattern. The colors range from deep indigo to bright magenta.

DEFINING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

DEFINING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

IDENTIFYING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

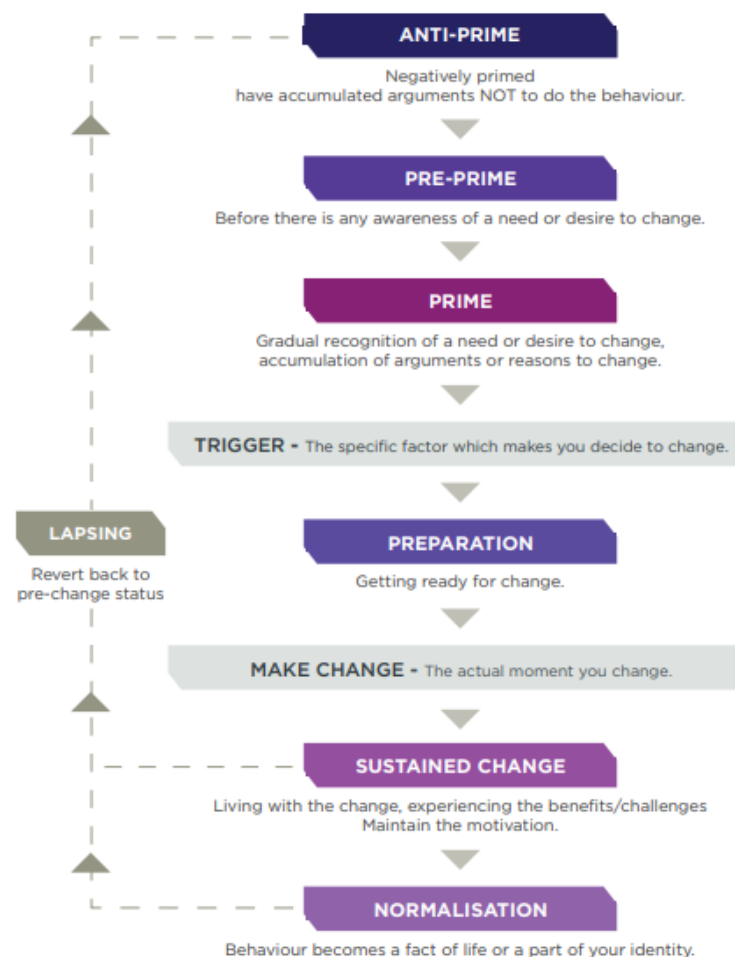
Identifying your target audience will enable you to tailor your content and be successful in bringing more women girls to your sporting activity. By considering the following questions, you can apply the insight presented in the most effective way. The audience you are targeting will be at a certain stage of a behaviour change journey..

What is the purpose of your marketing?			
Purpose	Reaching out to your current audience	Re-engaging a disengaged audience	Attracting new individuals to your sport/physical activity
Considerations	Are your usual methods successful?	Why did these individuals disengage?	What group of people are you hoping to target?

THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE JOURNEY

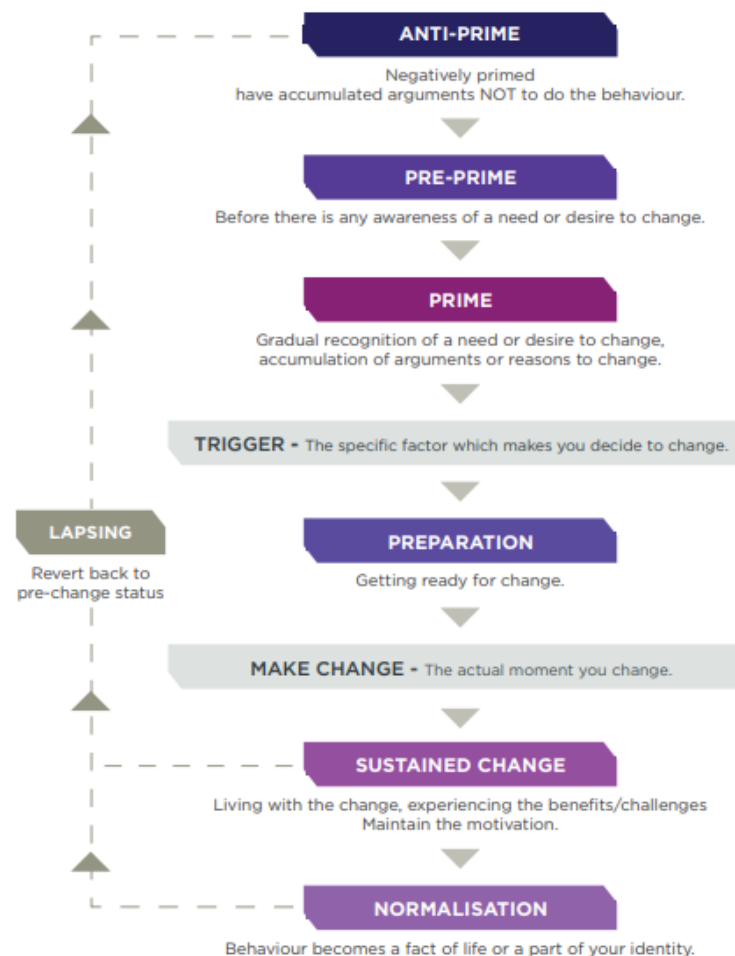
By understanding who you are trying to engage with your marketing, you can identify where they are likely to be on the behaviour change journey and what is required to normalise their participation in your activity.

- For example, an individual who is **inactive** might be at the **anti-prime, pre-prime or prime stages**. The stage they are at will influence how much motivation they have to change their behaviour. Asking your potential audience how they feel about sport and physical activity will help to inform you where they are in the journey.
- A person who is **active** but not engaged in your offer may be more **primed** to respond to a trigger to engage them
- For individuals who were once engaged, but now **'lapsed'** to become **'anti-prime'**, it is important to understand the reasons they disengaged.



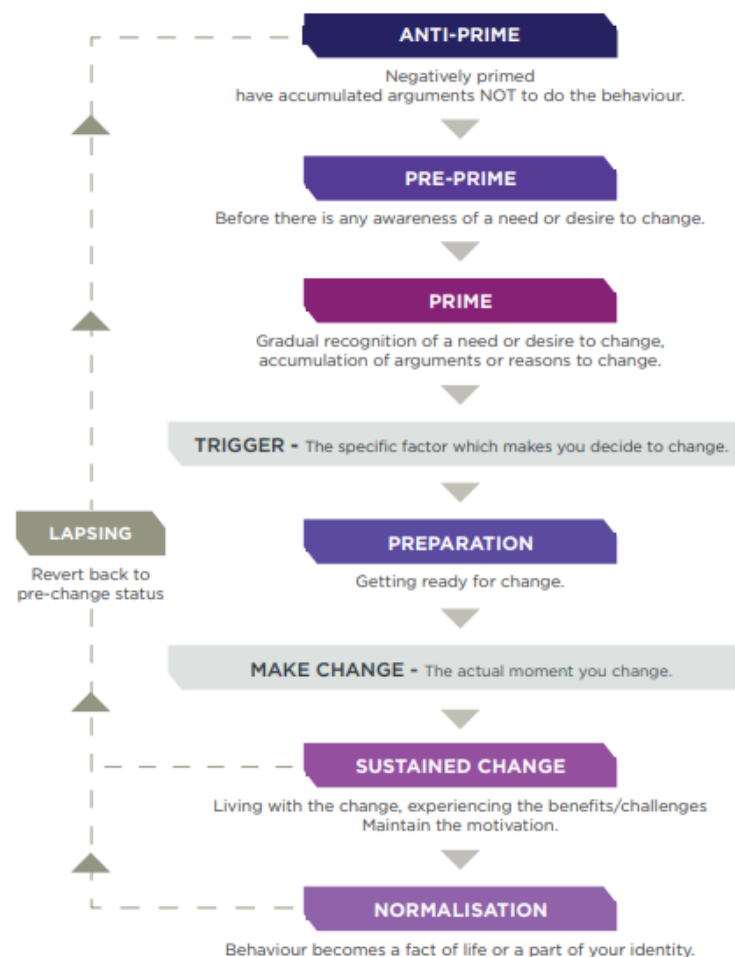
THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE JOURNEY

- A **'trigger'** can be anything that leads an individual to commit to become more active
- The step between deciding to make a change and actually making that change is especially important. **'Preparation'** describes the time when the individual is physically, mentally and emotionally preparing themselves to embark on something new.
- During this stage, the individual is particularly vulnerable to negative influences that might deter them taking the initial step to making a change. Providers should make this stage as easy as possible by ensuring the individual feels supported. This can include giving them all the information they need and reassuring them that they are welcome regardless of ability level.



THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE JOURNEY

- Once an individual takes the step to make the change, you shouldn't assume that the work is done. Sustaining that change by ensuring the individual remains engaged will eventually lead to a behaviour change where participating in the physical activity and sport offer becomes **normalised**.
- For individuals still engaged and where the offer is **normalised**, you need to understand how marketing is and is not working to ensure they do not lapse. Negative events, not feeling the benefits of participating or a change in the individual's availability are examples of factors that can result in lapsing.
- Individuals will have different experiences of sport and physical activity which influences how they progress through this journey. It is important you make efforts to understand what those experience are.



UNDERSTANDING THE MOTIVATIONS AND INFLUENCES OF YOUR AUDIENCE



Once you understand where your audience is on the behaviour change journey, you can evaluate the motivations and influences that will trigger them to engage or re-engage with your offer and help them along the behaviour change journey.

You can do this through consultation, whereby you ask a sample of your target group about what motivates them and what their perceived barriers are. This [Sport England report](#) is an excellent guide on how to conduct a consultation effectively.

MOTIVATIONS

1. An individual's **motivation** to participate in a sport or physical activity is influenced by how that sport or physical activity makes them feel.
2. You should use these motivations when designing your marketing campaign. It is important to **understand what your audiences experience is**, if any, with the sport or opportunity you are offering and how it might fit with their ambitions.
3. The best way to do this is to **speak to your target audience** to understand their experiences and what could help motivate them to engage in your sport or opportunity. The methods and tools you utilise in your marketing can adapt to these findings.
4. For example, one individual's motivation to engage with sport might be to get fit, whilst another person's motivation could be to feel more confident. **Creating content that responds to these motivations** will enable you to better engage those individuals.

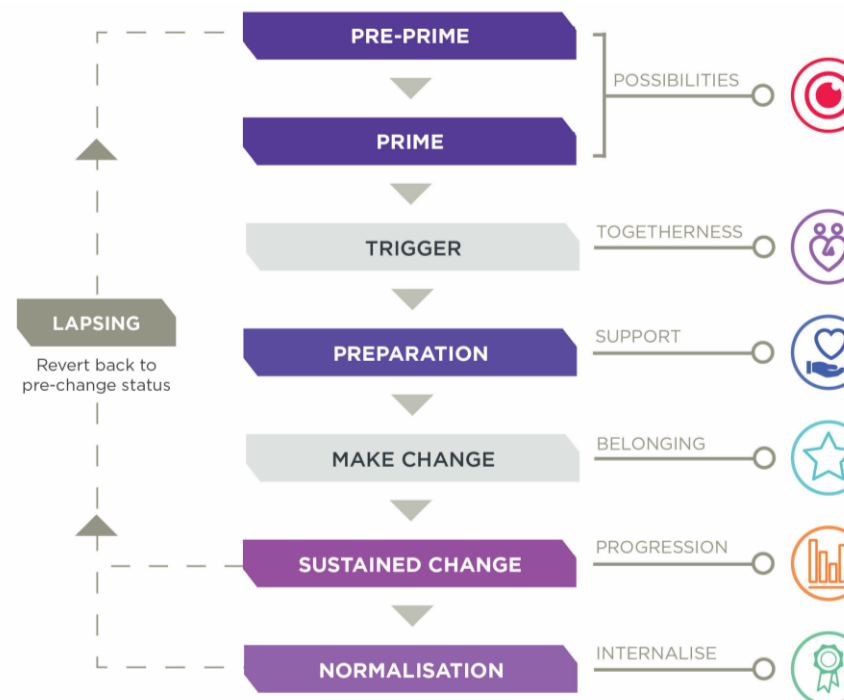
1. Sport England. A Guide to Research. <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/sport-england-research-guide.pdf>

2. What Sways Women to Play Sport? Women in Sport. <https://www.womeninsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/What-Sways-Women-To-Play-Sport.pdf>

INFLUENCES ALONG THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE JOURNEY

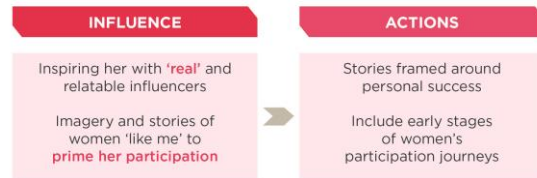
Women in Sport's Spheres of Influence can be used as a framework to better understand the influences that motivate your target audience through the behaviour change journey. The right influences can 'sway' your target audience to engage.

THE SIX KEY SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

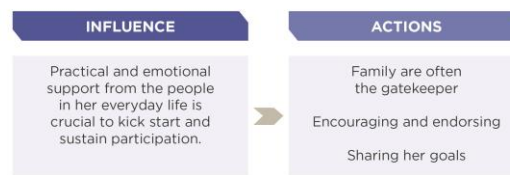


INFLUENCES ALONG THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE JOURNEY

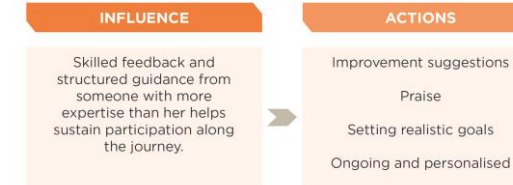
POSSIBILITIES OPENING HER EYES TO WHAT SHE CAN DO



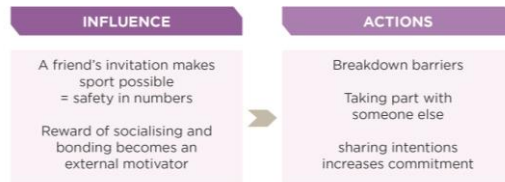
SUPPORT ENSURING SHE HAS BEHIND THE SCENES SUPPORT



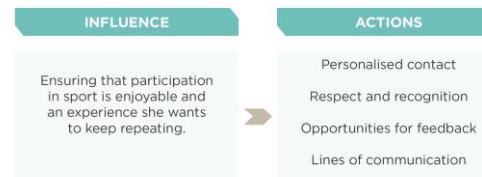
PROGRESSION GIVING HER A SENSE OF DIRECTION



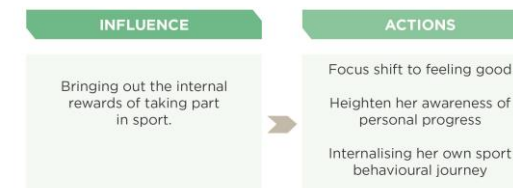
TOGETHERNESS TOGETHER SHE IS STRONGER



BELONGING MAKING HER FEEL INCLUDED AND VALUED



INTERNALISE HELPING HER REFLECT ON HER ACHIEVEMENTS



MOTIVATIONS AND INFLUENCERS



An influencer is a person who can shape someone else's attitudes towards sport and to affect or change how someone or something develops, behaves or thinks. An influencer can be anyone who impacts women's participation behaviours.



They could range from family, peers and mentors in someone's immediate social network, to high profile influencers, specific sports community or someone in their local community. Influencers can influence in a multi-faceted way- such as being a role model or supporting an individual's journey in sport and physical activity.



Your audience's influencers at different stages on the behaviour change journey may dictate whether your target audience engages. It is important to identify who the positive influences are, through consultation or research, and consider how to utilise them in your marketing strategy.

INFLUENCES CAN ACT:

POSITIVELY AND NEGATIVELY

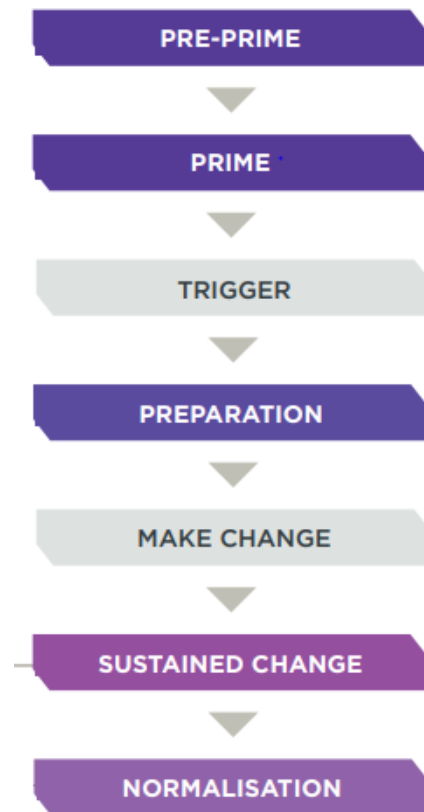
DELIBERATELY AND UNKNOWINGLY

DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY

CONSCIOUSLY AND SUBCONSCIOUSLY

HARNESSING INFLUENCERS

With effective marketing and influence, individuals can proceed through a behaviour change journey from 'pre-prime'- when they are not engaged, to normalisation, where the sport or physical activity is part of their everyday life.



- **Gain insight into how influencers impact progression at different stages of the behaviour change journey:** who are the people around your target audience that you need to engage, inform and empower, and when?
- **Collaboratively develop actions to help support these positive influences:** working together with influencers, you can identify and test new actions to affect change.
- **Develop understanding of the triggers and barriers to change:** collect feedback on what sparks or prevents a change can help you sustain change as well as mitigate barriers.
- **Engage your network:** working with those who are already connected with your sport/activity/group can help empower them to influence others.

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**DESIGNING CONTENT THAT
REACHES AND ENGAGES
YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE**

CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR CONTENT

Content is a broad term that applies to the material produced (such as videos, leaflets, social media posts) to stimulate interest in your products and services. Once you've identified your target audience and their motivations and influences, you should adapt your content so that it engages and inspires the right action.

Below we have summarised some of the key considerations you should take into account when developing your content for women and girls. These should underpin your content plan as you develop campaigns, resources, or even a simple email to engage the right people.

CONSIDERATIONS:



People like me: Use real, relatable people who are like the audience you are trying to connect with whether that's through images, stories or examples.

Journeys: Sharing stories from across a women's journey can inspire and engage and give the right perspective that people will be starting at different stages, reducing fear of trying.

Offers: Offering things such as bring a friend, try a session for free etc can help minimise barriers of entry for others and give a sense of safety to try things with friends.

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CONSIDERATIONS:



Support: Whether through the language you use, the community you promote, or information you make available, consider how your marketing can inform and support your audience to make the decision to participate. Think about things such as clearly stating what kit to wear, what level of ability the session is for and the contact information.

Language: Don't just talk about sport – you can attract interest through highlighting friendship, meeting new people and feeling good. Inclusive language can reduce perceived barriers of entry, including the level an activity is aimed at and whether it includes those with a disability, for example.

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CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR CONTENT

MESSAGING



Messaging (the way you frame the activity) should speak to women and girls' values, maximising the chance of it being relevant to them.

If you're unsure of how your audience feels, then including them in the process of developing your content, even if using a small survey or feedback, may help your message resonate better.

You can also inform your messaging by looking at blogs, forums and social channels and searching hashtags to get a feel for some of the issues and considerations among your target group.

Our [Understanding Women's Lives](https://www.womeninsport.org/research-and-advice/our-publications/understanding-womens-lives/) report identified a set of core values that underpin women's and girls' relationship with sport. Different values will be more relevant to them at different stages of their lives.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR CONTENT

EXAMPLES OF CONTENT THAT SPEAK TO THE DIFFERENT CORE VALUES

TUESDAY ISN'T GOOD FOR ME

I'm making my mark on court

CHALKWELL PARK, SOUTHEND
12TH MAY – 13TH OCTOBER
7PM - 8PM

CLEAR YOUR CALENDAR AND BOOK YOUR SESSIONS NOW AT TENNISTUESDAYS.CO.UK

TENNIS TUESDAYS
SOCIAL TENNIS. SERIOUS FUN.

THIS GIRL CAN LTA BRITISH TENNIS

GOGA Buggy Fit Lurgan

in partnership with
SLNRA'S Loughshore Family Action Project

Come along and develop your fitness with other mums and babies in a fun, relaxed and enjoyable environment.

Date: Every Friday (starts back 14th September)
Time: 9.45am - 10.45am
Venue: Lurgan Park (meeting at the fountain but may change over Winter)
Cost: £1

This class is suitable for all abilities and exercises will be adapted to suit your fitness level.

For further information please contact Ryan McQuillan, Active Recreation Officer on
Email: mmcquillan@liveactiveni.co.uk Tel: 07799137291 WEB: www.liveactiveni.co.uk

LIVE ACTIVE NI Get Out Get Active Sports 2012 SLNRA Armagh City Banbridge & Castlegreen Borough Council

I RUN to stay in shape

#WHYWERUN
RUNENGLAND.ORG/WHYWERUN

ZUMBA #GIRLSALLOWED PILOXING
BELROBBICS STREET DANCE CHEERLEADING

TRY OUT AS MANY ACTIVITIES AS YOU LIKE TO COLLECT HAIR AND BEAUTY TREATS, AND ENTER OUR PRIZE DRAW TO WIN SHOPPING VOUCHERS!

WHERE? BURY COLLEGE SPORTS HALL
WHEN? WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL, 1.30-4.00PM
HOW MUCH? FREE!

BURY COLLEGE
I WILL IF YOU WILL .CO.UK

f t i @ I_WILL_IF

DESIGNING CONTENT THAT REACHES AND ENGAGES YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

IDENTIFYING THE MOST APPROPRIATE CHANNELS

The most authentic way to engage your audience is using channels they already use. If you're involving existing members or a group of your target audience to inform your plans, discuss the ways that they would search for your activity, preferred channels to keep in touch with you and any barriers they face with different platforms. When reaching out to new participants, it is important that you identify what channels they are most likely to interact with so that the marketing effort is most effective. Some suggestions are below:

Word of mouth is consistently the most effective form of peer-to-peer marketing, no matter the age. Women and girls who already participate in your sport, or attend a specific session, programme or club, will be your biggest advocates. **Turn your advocates into ambassadors** by helping them spread the word, whether that's through their stories and successes, bringing their friends and family along, or sharing via channels such as social media.

Social media can help your existing participants engage with you and share with their friends. Social media profiles do require time to keep up to date and engaging if they're going to be useful though. **Don't rush to have a profile on every platform** – some platforms may suit your target audience and time availability better than others. You can also ask your existing participants to share on their profiles for you – just be clear about how an interested party can find out more or contact you.

DESIGNING CONTENT THAT REACHES AND ENGAGES YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

IDENTIFYING THE MOST APPROPRIATE CHANNELS

Some organisations don't think of their **website** as a marketing channel but it's one of the most important ones. This is where potential new participants will come when they're interested in learning more about you, and if they can't find answers to their questions quickly, they are unlikely to stick around. Your website should offer a good first impression by showing clearly that you offer products and activities that are ideal for them to try.

Email newsletters are one of the best forms of direct marketing, especially to individuals already engaged. Users have opted in to hear from you (make sure your database is GDPR compliant), so they're more willing to open your emails to learn about your latest activity and how they can get involved. Try to make it as personalised and relevant as possible, with a catchy subject line!



Where your target audience is on the behavior change journey will determine how creative you'll need to be to reach them. A pre-primed disengaged individual is unlikely to go to your website or see a poster at a gym. They may however, see a poster in a local supermarket or hear about your activity from an influencer. A **lapsed** individual may still be engaged with your social media platforms.

DESIGNING CONTENT THAT REACHES AND ENGAGES YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

KEY TAKE-AWAYS & GOOD PRACTICE

1. Research is key and the best way to learn about your target audience is by directly consulting the individuals you want to reach. Learn how you can pitch your offer to meet their needs, **motivations**, and interests.
2. If you don't have the chance to talk to them directly, **listen** to what they may be saying elsewhere on blogs, forums and social channels like Instagram and Facebook.
3. It is important to consider girl's and women's **previous experiences** of sport and how these may have shaped their attitudes towards sport.
4. Depending on your offer and target audience, you may need to consider **addressing some misconceptions** about your activity; for example, that your sport is only for the most talented or experienced.
5. Be sure to vary the mediums you employ for your marketing. On average, you need to repeat your message **a minimum of seven times to be noticed**. Make sure you diversify the channels you use to prevent your target audience from getting bored of your messaging.
6. Aim to build a community where women and girls participating **feel supported** by each other. Setting up a Facebook page or WhatsApp group can enable participants and your potential participants to communicate and gather the information they need to engage.

DESIGNING CONTENT THAT REACHES AND ENGAGES YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE



EXAMPLES:

THIS GIRL CAN

In early 2020, This Girl Can launched their second marketing campaign aiming to inspire less active girls and women to participate in sport and physical activity. Using a diversity of role models, it aims to influence women and girls who might be in the anti-prime, pre-prime or prime stages of their behaviour change journey.

LONDON SPORT

London Sport utilised Facebook to encourage less active people into walking. They conducted a research piece to identify the most effective and efficient ways to use the platform to reach their target audience.

ENGLAND NETBALL- BACK TO NETBALL

Over 10 years, the 'Back to Netball' attracted 100,000 participants to re-engage with netball. England Netball recognised the untapped pool of women who had experience of playing netball, but needed a relevant offer to attract them back to the sport.

ADIDAS' D ROSE JUMP STORE

From a commercial perspective, Adidas launched this pop-up store and story-telling event to appeal to less interested UK audiences.

RELEVANT SOURCES & REPORT



- Puberty & Sport: An Invisible Stage - <https://www.womeninsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Puberty-PP.pdf>
- Menopause, Me and Physical Activity - <https://www.womeninsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Menopause-report-PDF-final-1-2.pdf>
- What Sways Women to Play Sport - <https://www.womeninsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/What-Sways-Women-To-Play-Sport.pdf>
- Reframing Sport for Teenage Girls: Building Strong Foundations for their Futures - <https://www.womeninsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Reframing-Sport-for-Teenage-Girls-small.pdf>
- A Guide to Research. Sport England- <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/sport-england-research-guide.pdf>
- Understanding Women's Lives - <https://www.womeninsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Understanding-Womens-Lives.pdf>

CONTACT US

We hope you have found our short guide to marketing to women and girls useful. If you would like to discuss any of our research reports, future projects or ways in which Women in Sport can work with you, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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