

AYSO Program: Marketing
Lead Instructor: Marketing /
Development Staff or Commission
Members who have familiarity with
the Soccer Solutions Study on
which this presentation is based

“Rec” Is NOT a Four-Letter Word: How to Leverage Who We Are

Latest Revision Date: 10/31/14
Length: 75 minutes
Page: 1 of 20



Change History	
10/31/14	Origination

1. DESCRIPTION

This is a 75 minute workshop (including the marketing ‘pod” and Q&A) designed to help Regions understand that their “recreational” soccer program is a powerful opportunity in the soccer marketplace and how they can practically take advantage of that position.

2. GOALS

- Give participants and understanding of what the AYSO Brand means to the external (our families – current and prospective) audiences.
- Understand how the marketplace perceives youth soccer in general, and AYSO’s place in that marketplace
- Consider a variety of ways to “go on the offensive” about who we are and what we do in AYSO and turn perceived negatives into positives
- Acquire practical knowledge and tools for how to begin the process in their home Regions.

3. PREREQUISITES

- none

4. STUDENT MATERIALS

- None

5. INSTRUCTOR EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- Flip chart and markers

6. INSTRUCTOR NOTES

- The workshop is comprised of two main parts: Part 1 - the background and research, Part 2 being the how to leverage it as a Region.
- Part 1 should take 20-25 minutes. Part 2 should take 35-40 minutes. Aiming to complete them both in 60-65 minutes allows for Q&A time.
- Have fun and be relentlessly optimistic and empowering!

LESSON PLAN

Slide #1: “Rec” Is NOT a FOUR-Letter Word

- A. Welcome, workshop leader and any support personnel introductions.
- B. Ground Rules – recap of format – interactivity and questions, OK and welcomed. There will be time for Q&A at end.

Slide #2: What we’ll cover in today’s workshop

- i. Give you and understanding of what the AYSO Brand means to the external (our families – current and prospective) audiences.
- ii. Understand how the marketplace perceives youth soccer in general, and AYSO’s place in that marketplace

It’s important to note that our own view of the soccer world is colored by our deep involvement as volunteers...so we are going to share some research that helps us take our AYSO-colored lenses off for a moment.

- iii. Consider a variety of ways to “go on the offensive” about who we are and what we do in AYSO and turn perceived negatives into positives, and
- iv. Acquire practical knowledge and tools for how to begin the process in their home Regions.

Slide #3: “AYSO...it’s just Rec soccer”

Let’s start out by asking...what do YOU hear about AYSO and “Rec soccer”? What do people in your region say? How many of you have heard people talk about AYSO this way?

Instructor Note: (we are looking for – and almost universally get – agreement that when people say “Rec” soccer it’s often used derisively).

Today we’re going to get you started on turning the tables on all that!

Slide #4: AYSO as seen from the Outside...

In order to turn the tide, we turned to the outside, ourselves.

- A. **In 2011 AYSO went to the experts...*Soccer Solutions*** – ‘best in class’ soccer marketing firm to get a professional and unbiased perspective on how the AYSO brand of soccer perceived by the EXTERNAL soccer community.
 - i. Partners are Warren Mersereau, Mick Hoban, Jurgen Klinsmann – over 75 years of combined soccer marketing expertise

- ii. Clients have included U.S. Soccer, Nike, adidas, Umbro, US Youth Soccer, U.S. Club Soccer, MLS, German Soccer Federation, Euro clubs
- iii. AYSO was the last outside project Klinsmann participated in before accepting the appointment as U.S. National Coach

B. They examined the entire youth soccer market, including...

- i. All of the youth soccer brands (clubs, SAY, etc.)
- ii. The youth soccer business landscape
- iii. AYSO programs, products, structure, and other research we've conducted
- iv. A process to compare and contrast “recreational” and “competitive” soccer
- v. New ways to think about AYSO

C. Then they made their recommendations...

- i. What the study has done is shown a spotlight on what AYSO is from the outside looking in, which as we will see is every bit as important – if not more important – than how we want to be perceived.
- ii. What your AYSO Marketing team has done is boiled those findings down and assessed what it means to YOU in your Regions, and how you can use this most valuable learning in YOUR marketplace, to get credit for the great programs YOU offer and make your volunteer lives easier and more fulfilling.

Slide #5: A Great, Trusted, Wholesome Brand

- A. The first and most important conclusion and thread throughout the whole study is easy to overlook but it is a very important conclusion: despite challenges at both the Regional and National levels, the AYSO brand is a strong, trusted, wholesome brand that is widely understood and embraced, relative to other comparable soccer organizations. At the brand level we are operating from a position of strength. This is an advantage we must not only leverage, but also work to preserve.

Slide #6: “The AYSO Brand clearly stands for something right now: recreation soccer”

- A. The people at Soccer Solutions honed in on the core of AYSO's identity to the outside world – what the brand stands for, what it means to people.
- B. Yes, the answer is AYSO stands for recreational soccer.
- C. It's important to understand that and on some level accept it. It doesn't mean we can never be anything else. But as we will see any brand's

identity, once it's ingrained in people's minds, is not at all easy to change. And the study was also bullish on AYSO's potential to use this identity as strength, vs. just reacting to "what the other guys are doing."

Slide #7: A Great, Trusted, Wholesome Brand

- A. At the end of the day, we want more people to come to AYSO and stay with AYSO. In retail terms – we want more sales!
- B. Similar challenges to what we face are tackled by brands in every conceivable product and service category imaginable, out in the real world. Brands with great equity and positive associations at one point or another need to figure out how to use their brand strength to tackle a sales threat or challenge.
- C. **Taking a look at how this challenge might be tackled by a brand not called AYSO might help us understand the concept better** (hit [clicker her to animate cheerios image](#)) by allowing us to step outside of the world we know so well. So, here is a hypothetical example of one such brand.
 - i. Like AYSO, Cheerios is a wholesome, trusted, great American brand. Parents revere it and they trust it for themselves and their children. Can we agree that AYSO might be called the Cheerios of Youth Soccer, or that maybe Cheerios is the AYSO of cereals?

Slide #8: Options

- A. But suppose the people in charge of that brand need to address a situation where fewer people are eating Cheerios than they did in the past...or are not eating Cheerios at all anymore. So, they study their primary buyer – the mom – and the overall market, to see where they can maybe gain some business back, and restore growth. And let's say they discover that in the breakfast category sometimes mom will bypass their product for hot breakfast. In fact they find out that there are all kinds of breakfast options out there that they are not currently participating in.

Slide #9: Cheerios Retention & Growth Plan

- A. So their product and marketing people go away and come up with a plan to deliver their brand into new product areas to extend their brand across more breakfast options. They are determined to tell mom, hey, if you want something different for breakfast, our great brand that you know and love has something for you too! They pool the top talent in their organization and pour money and time into coming up with extremely high quality and tasty products in some new categories.

Instructor note: (animate slides)

- B. Clearly this doesn't work. Mom doesn't get it. She has a mental space in her brain already carved out for Cheerios and myriad other products in her "breakfast" mindset.
- C. Cheerios is wholesome, nutritious, convenient, easy to prepare, and...cold.
- D. Cheerios may be primarily a breakfast food...but more than that, it is a breakfast...cereal. It is the perfect choice much of the time, but not all of the time. Its power is in delivering great...cereal. It diminishes when it tries to be all things "breakfast."
- E. Cheerios learns that just having a product out there with their name on it – even an excellent product – isn't good enough. It has to fit with what the market is willing to accept.

Slide #10: “The AYSO Brand clearly stands for something right now: recreation soccer”

- A. Soccer Solutions has pointed out to us that AYSO programs that propose to enter into what the market regards as “more competitive soccer” are met with as much disorientation or skepticism as “Cheerios Bacon” would be. The youth soccer market, like the breakfast market, has some built in perceptions of categories. And today, we are not a natural fit with “highly competitive soccer” as it is currently defined.
 - i. It doesn't mean you can't offer “more competitive soccer”, or that you shouldn't. It doesn't mean that programs like AYSO Extra are not a good idea.
 - ii. But it does mean we should be acutely aware that it is not going to be easy to change the way the market thinks, on the basis of “being there” alone.
 - iii. It does mean that you have to understand that if you roll out AYSO Extra or other programs designed to combat the perception of competitiveness, the first reaction is going to be like...“Cheerios Bacon?”
 - iv. This is because there is a central truth in the business of branding: perception is reality, and changing perceptions is a long and difficult process and one that is fraught with peril.

Slide #11: Why is that?

- A. I'd like you to think about ‘What is a Brand? The yellow box represents the Cheerios brand in a very powerful way, but that is just a representation.

- B. Seth Godin is probably the most famous marketing guy today. He’s a Rock Star in the branding and marketing world, with a dozen books, the best-read marketing blog on the planet and yet he puts things in a very simple way. So we’d like to use his definition of branding.
- C. A brand is really everything someone has heard from their friends, experienced themselves, seen on TV, heard in the line at the market, or whatever and when it’s all combined, it’s the mental picture that helps them decide to choose, in our case, AYSO... or something else. And when they see a logo, it’s all of those experiences that come to their mind. Good or bad! That’s the power of the brand.
- D. Put another way: the brand IS whatever the consumer thinks it is...not necessarily what WE think it is or what we WANT them to think it is.

Slide #12: The Market’s Perception (Reality) of Youth Soccer

- A. What Seth wrote about what a brand is and how it derives meaning is not really a new idea – it’s just really well put. The idea that what the customer believes is all that matters is not a new idea in marketing, or sales.
- B. The soccer solutions study tells us that the market believes that THERE IS MORE THAN ONE KIND OF YOUTH SOCCER.
 - i. More than that, what AYSO stands for is NOT aligned with what the youth soccer market regards as the things that define “competitive soccer.”

Slide #13: External Market View

- A. Mental images look a lot like this. The defining characteristics of the two ends of the youth soccer spectrum are...you guessed it, opposite ends of the spectrum as well.

Instructor note: animate the points one by one

- B. These are the attributes and qualities of the different kids of youth soccer the marketplace sees and at some point, has to make a decision about.

Instructor note: explain the youth soccer pyramid (last point). Parents and players believe there is a pathway to the top and many of them are very determined to make sure they have a shot at it. The trouble is, a lot of them fall off the pyramid. Soccer solutions uses the phrase “Darwinian.” It seems so very un-AYSO to believe that kids stop playing at a point they can climb no further, but that is what happens!

Slide #14: Soccer Solutions Continuum

- A. Soccer Solutions’ work indicates organization placement on the marketplace continuum; note that USYS and US Club are not really brands at all, rather they are branded at the individual Club level.
- B. SS also notes that other programs are increasingly reaching back across the continuum to offer rec-style options. Unfortunately, that is an easier task for them than the reverse is for us, and all the more reason we need to shore up our Rec roots and programs, and give it focus and credibility. Clubs create rec programs to feed and develop their top tier teams; we do it because we want every kid who wants to play soccer, to play soccer. There’s a difference!

Slide #15: AYSO & “Competitive” Programs:

- A. Just as there is more than one kind of breakfast food, there is more than one kind of youth soccer. You have Cheerios on one hand and fried breakfast meats on the other. We may want to think of them both as breakfast foods, but they aren’t the same thing at all.
- B. For example, part of the appeal of “Competitive” soccer is that it is anything BUT open registration – sure anyone can try out, but it is selective. If you don’t make the cut, you aren’t registered and you don’t play. Not exactly easy to square up with AYSO philosophy...and that’s just the start! And, the Soccer Solutions study pointed out if we try to modify “who we are” to fit in this world, guess what...we run the very real risk of losing our well earned and highly positive identity.

Slide #16: Now for the Good News...

Slide #17: “Rec” is not a Four-Letter Word

- A. This is not just a wish list item for us, it is another important aspect of the Soccer Solutions study, that is closely related to their reminding us that AYSO is a terrific brand:
 - i. “Rec” is not bad. You may have heard it used or referred to derisively in the world of highly competitive youth soccer...but the vast majority of the market wants and needs and yes buys, recreational soccer. Soccer Solutions regards this as an almost unassailable positive that we own.

Slide #18: Why We Should Actively Embrace Our “Rec” status

- A. Here is a number that exists in actual AYSO research that was cited in the Soccer Solutions Study. (hit clicker to animate the number: 14%)
- i. It's from our exit surveys conducted within the past few years – feedback from parents who did not sign their child up for the program after having been in it for at least a season.
 - ii. FOURTEEN PERCENT is the percentage of parents in these exit interviews that cited “looking for more competitive options” as the reason they left AYSO. If you think that number seems of – go ahead and double it - it is still clear that a vast majority of player loss is NOT coming due to our perceived lack of competitive soccer options.
 - iii. (Hit clicker to animate pie chart) So, to put it another way, 86% did not return because of some reason other than “it's only recreational soccer.” This tells us we can do better, simply by being better at what we already do!

Slide #19: Brand Leverage

- A. ...and we have just the credibility necessary to leverage it – and we already touched on it earlier: In addition to standing for recreation, the Soccer Solutions study also told us this about our brand.

Instructor note: quickly read bullets to reinforce the points

- i. The main point is, we HAVE a brand. A bigger, richer, brand than any other youth soccer organization. And it carries forward these very positive attributes.

Slide #20: So how do we do it?

Slide #21: Four Ways to Prove That Rec is Not a Four-Letter Word

- A. Here are 4 ways you can use our “Rec” identity to help your program thrive and make your volunteer life more fulfilling (if not easier)...

Slide #22: Give them M – O – R – E

- A. As you know we like acronyms in AYSO so hopefully this will guide you in remembering things that you can take with you back to your Regions.

Slide #23: (read through what each letter signifies)

Slide #24: Market and Promote Your AYSO Menu

First up...the M.

Slide #25: Market & Promote Your AYSO Menu

Going back to our friends with the yellow box...how would this apply? If Cheerios Bacon misses the mark, what can Cheerios do to expand from its strength?

Slide #26

- A. Turns out, the answer is, A LOT. Maybe we can't get into all things breakfast...but there is still room for lots of creativity on how we offer new "flavors" of and new "packages" for what we do well. Cheerios has indeed, in the real world, done these things and a lot more. New flavors. Different package sizes. Leveraging its portability as a product. And so on...

Slide #27

(NOTE: this slide is present only to serve as animation bridge hit clicker and move on to next)

Slide #28

- A. Many of you are already, or can be, doing the same thing as Cheerios. (hit clicker to animate programs)
- B. For example, a number of you are probably already running some of these programs.

(Instructor note: ask audience for a show of hands/comment on what they have in the Regions)

- i. If you're not running some or even all of these, what's holding you back?
- C. The question to ask yourselves– and something we will get back to in a few minutes – is, how well are you communicating about all the other soccer programs you running in addition to the Standard Primary Program? Are you getting all the credit you should for being a resource for all different kinds of flavors and packages and choices for delivering youth soccer in your communities? Do your families understand the variety of flavors that even a "Rec" soccer program can offer?

Slide #29 Promote Your Full AYSO Menu

Inventory & leverage what you are already doing...

Don't assume "everyone already knows". Your U6 parents aren't thinking much about your U12 tournament team or Area playoffs or Extra. Or VIP. Or winter clinic, and so on...unless you let them know.

Parents want to know that you have a "Soccer Pathway" for their children. Give them a sense of what's next for their kids!

Don't leave out: SoccerFest, Opening or Closing Day Events, Clinics, position training sessions, After School programs, Non-soccer Community service. etc.

Then, Get Out and talk about it!

Web, Social Media, All your "regular" communications.

And don't forget to Empower/Educate your coaches & referees to understand and communicate all this as well. They are your front line troops who have the most direct and visible connections to your families.

Slide #30 Menu as Framework to "explain" AYSO approach to player development

A menu approach to what you offer also allows us to explain the very thoughtful design of our short sided play program, the coaching program, the incremental way skills are taught and laws of the game applied, and so on. Use this opportunity to explain to parents the "why". Young kids learn best by playing the game – not be being pressured to win, or being drilled incessantly on technical points that most of them probably aren't ready for. Let's take "everyone plays" and talk about it as the positive that it is!

Slide #31 Soccer Pathways

A moment ago I mentioned "Soccer Pathways." This was also a key finding of the Soccer Solutions study – that AYSO needs to do a better job of articulating how player development works in AYSO. Parents of a U6 player may not be thinking every minute about what that child's soccer future holds, but you can't go wrong by highlighting that there is a pathway. The alternative is they assume they have to leave at some point! Every Region has some form of development path, whether it's simply moving up the ladder from short-sided play to 11 v 11, or partaking in other AYSO programs as well.

Your club counterparts are mostly doing a good job of painting a picture of progress – they thrive on the soccer pyramid idea. AYSO has a progression too...and we shouldn't assume everyone knows what it is all

about. Paint a picture for parents of young players, that lets them know that if their child loves the game, AYSO is more than capable of fostering his or her development as the child grows.

Slide #32 Offer AYSO Products that meet your community’s needs

So now that we’ve talked about getting smarter about how we talk about what you already have, let’s talk for a few minutes about what you don’t have right now that could help your Region stand out as the go-to soccer program in your community.

Slide #33 Offer AYSO Products that meet your community’s needs

What works/can work in YOUR community?
Remember, the majority of those who don’t come back are NOT leaving for more competitive programs.

Slide #34 Think About Your Community’s Un-met Soccer Needs

How many of you, hearing me say that, are thinking...unmet need? There is no shortage of soccer choices for parents where I come from!

Let’s get a few ideas going. I’ll bet some of you are already doing some of them.

(hit clicker to animate first line of body text)

First, remember our soccer pyramid? (Hit clicker again to animate image)
What is happening to the kids who “fall off” of it...kids who get cut from a club team, or kids who don’t like it and quit. Kids who gave up soccer for another sport or activity but decided that one wasn’t for them. How many of you have actively gone out and tried to offer them the chance to play soccer again? They probably started with your Region to begin with...

What kind of programs might you be able to create to get them back onto an AYSO field?

(hit clicker to animate a handful of ideas in text. The idea is to get the audience thinking there is more they can do beyond assuming you could “only” offer Standard Primary Program style team play in your regular league...)

Slide #35 Think About Your Community’s Un-met Soccer Needs

Here are some more ideas:

What about making alliances with your school teams? All good coaches know kids get better by playing more...what kinds of programs might you develop where school coaches can encourage their player to play AYSO when school teams are not in season? Or to offer clinics or other exposure? Or even send varsity players to help out younger teams in some way? In many communities a strong school program alliance can actually be a competitive edge...

Does your local Park & Rec department, or a neighboring town, offer recreational sports, even soccer? How might both of you benefit by some kind of alliance? Did you know that AYSO has a partnership with the National Recreation and Parks Association that you can leverage to get programs started or take them to the next level? It's called Soccer in a Box...

Note: Queries/interest should be directed to Pete MacPhail - National Development Director - PeteMacPhail@ayso.org; if this specific query comes up, be sure to note this email on the flip chart - or introduce Master MacPhail, as there is a good chance that if he is at this Expo, he will be in the room!)

Have you heard parents say they didn't sign up because of conflicts with other programs? How about reaching out to the leadership of other programs to see what you can work out so both programs can benefit from kids who are interested? Would a "competitive club" program ever do something like that, to benefit the kid?

Parents love the perception of travel, and the excitement of tournament play. How about organizing play in local tournaments, even if all that's available to you is non-AYSO tournaments? Wouldn't you like to "wave the flag" at one of those anyway?

What else? Has anyone tried anything new and different? I assure you, I have the authority to grant everyone in this room immunity if you're worried you've tried something "off the reservation".... 😊

Slide #36 Reframe the Conversation about Volunteers

So let's move on to the "R" in "MORE"

Slide # 37: Reframe the Conversation about Volunteers

- A. When people speak about “Rec soccer” as being something less than “real soccer”, they will often point to the fact that AYSO is mostly volunteers – specifically moms and dads coaching teams and refereeing games.
 - i. It’s time for us to stop apologizing for this, and instead stand up and tell our story.
 - ii. Part of that story is that our volunteers are expected to be trained and or certified for the jobs that they have. Our training programs for coaches, referees, and managers are all highly regarded programs all on their own. This is not mom or dad rolling out the soccer balls on a Saturday morning; this is parents who have made the investment in learning how to best provide a great playing and skill development environment for kids that’s age-specific. Parents want to know that their kids will have the opportunity to learn from people trained to do their jobs. We have that!
- B. A related point – it is not inappropriate to mention that our trained and certified volunteers have made the time and intellectual investment to learn their jobs for no reason other than to convey a great experience to players and their families. Our business is kids...not...business!

Slide #38: Re-Frame the Conversation

How well would you say you communicate to your families and your community as a whole, the important news about training and certification? It doesn’t hurt to recognize volunteers for the hard work they put in to acquire their training, while at the same time letting the world know that ours is a program that takes these matters seriously? A press release to the local paper or online newsgroup can be used not only to promote training sessions, but to recognize those that achieved various credentials. Don’t just note the events and dates on your website. Follow up with names and congratulations – again, this lets the community know that the people running the program and training their kids are not just caretakers, but real achievers.

Slide #39: Clarify what it means to be a Volunteer-Driven organization

So in summary some key action steps and talking points on reframing the volunteer conversation – because we really do need to clarify what it means:

We DO have “Trained and Certified” Volunteers...not caretakers or babysitters. They have benefited from World-class training, taking highly regarded curricula.

Our volunteers invest their time in YOUR kids - For the love of the game/for the kids...

Or said another way, they are not in it for the _____. They give the time you see, and the training time that you don't, with no thought of personal enrichment. They do it for the kids – YOUR kids.

And remember - your volunteers' training/credentials achieved = worthy of promotion. For your volunteers AND for your program's perception of credibility.

Slide #40 : Extend and Expand the Calendar of Communication

Now to complete our acronym, with the letter E. E is for Extend...

Slide #41 : Communicating often tells parents you have a vibrant, active program...in addition to giving them the information they are looking for

They want and need information, yes. And by providing it to them often and in many ways, you are sending a strong signal that the organization is really “on its game.” That will help you enormously in overcoming any perception that AYSO is “just Rec” and not serious about its soccer product.

Slide #42: Extend and Expand the Calendar of Communication

There are a few rules to keep in mind when thinking about extending communication across the calendar, that might be summed up in a few words: you can never do too much.

RULE #1: There is no such thing as giving parents/community TOO MUCH information.

RULE #2: You need to communicate the same thing frequently and across as many channels as possible

RULE #3: There is no OFF SEASON for communicating with your Families

What kind of problem would you rather have – parents saying you communicate too much, or parents that are angry that they don't get information or can't find what they are looking for? In today's highly connected world, with so much information at our fingertips 24/7, it's not counterproductive to do more. It's worse to assume that you tell them once, and everybody gets it.

Did you know that in then world of email marketing, if 30% of people open your emails, that's outstanding? It's not wrong to assume that half your emails will never even be opened, much less read and recalled.

Slide #43: Key Dates and Teasers

Let’s get a few ideas going starting with this one. Every program is driven by dates and timing, and it’s never too early to let parents know about the ones they need to know about. What date will registration open? close? When does the season start? When will sign up start for off-season programs. When will I be notified of my child’s team? If I signed up to ref what are the training dates for that? Don’t worry about not having all the information you need to publish all the details – once you lock into your dates, start with some save the date messaging. People understand there is more to come and will appreciate the heads up.

Slide #44: Coming Soon

This kind of messaging is particularly important if you’re launching a new program. You need to drum up excitement and interest. You need to snag some interested people as new volunteers. You need to let the world know that your program is evolving and growing to meet the community needs! Again, even if you can’t provide every last detail – “Coming soon” messaging that has actual news value can really help on every level.

Slide #45: Team News

Have a team or teams in our Region that accomplished something special, on the field or off? Let the whole community know. Just the fact that some of your teams participated in a tournament, or Area playoffs, etc., is important news even for the families of your U6 players. Remember what we said about soccer pathways?

It’s also a good way to recognize the volunteers who helped make it possible – for example, Jane Doe, the team coach, completed her 12-hour AYSO Intermediate training earlier this year and now has taken her team to a second place finish in the Happytown Soccer Festival. The team parent can acknowledge the other parents for their help too, and so on.

Slide #46: Other News and Events

You and your board do a lot, and it is worth letting everyone know what you’re up to. Again, this goes to soccer credibility and combatting the idea that “Rec” is not serious in its own way.

Publish the dates, times, and places of your Board meetings and invite the public. Doesn’t matter if no one but the board comes.

Let your families know what a big deal it is that Fox Sports, the premier soccer TV provider in the US, has made AYSO its youth program of choice.

Do you take part in any July 4th or other off-season programming? Talking about it to the public is a way to have presence.

When do you order your uniforms? How about turning that into a spring contest – let the players and parents vote on one or two choices – its fun, involving, engaging, and might just get you more followers for you Facebook or twitter or more visitors aware of your website. And it says: this is YOUR program...the more people feel bonded with your region, the less likely they are to deride it as “just Rec.”

Slide #47: More Content is Available

If you're struggling to find content to post on your site or your page, during high season or during lulls in activity – there is a TON of material available for you in the Marketing Toolkit you can find on AYSO.org. Videos, TV commercials featuring name brand soccer stars, of all kinds, that you can link to. Images to use in your emails. Templates to use to make posters or flyers. Great summaries of special programs like VIP or Pre-Soccer, that you can post or copy from. You could literally pick a new piece of content every day to pull out and use as news...and still have some left over for next year. OK that may be a bit much even by my standards, but you get my point!

There's a parent orientation video there – how many of you have seen it? Anybody here use it? It's a great item to have on your website for new parents and prospective parents. AYSO in sight, sound, and motion, professionally done and emanating pride in who we are.

Slide #48: Registration

I know you all do SOME kind of communication with regard to registration, which is our most obvious part of the communication calendar. I want to make sure you are all aware of the treasure trove of registration goodies available on the tool kit as well – everything from guides and tips to pre-made posters, flyers, and ads you can customize to your Region.

You may have a format and vehicles for registration that you have used successfully in the past, and that's great. But I am here to suggest to you that you need to extend and expand that communication too – start priming the pump earlier, send reminders, and really go heavy on promoting your registration events to make sure no one slips through the cracks. And instead of sending the same thing out over and over again – vary the form and the style using tools from the toolkit. You never know what might connect with one family or another....

Slide #49: Think Digital and Multi-Platform

Even if what works for you is old school posters or simple text emails...it's time to start thinking about going heavy into the digital domain. Today's young parents grew up in a much different world than we did, and we need to be aware of the tools

and channels they favor. It’s cool – expected even – to have the same information pumped out across different media – so by going digital you are really delivering on the idea of expanding your communications. Plus, it’s quick and easy, once you get the hang of it...not to mention instant. No waiting for flyers to get sent out or posters to be printed. When you’re ready...your message is out there!

Slide #50: MORE...swagger!

Yes folks, it’s time to take the offensive about our Rec identity and that starts with our own attitude.

Slide #51: Let’s Put Some Swagger Into Our Step!

- A. How we change the conversation about Rec:
- B. There is something very powerful and positive in the idea of kids playing for the love of the game, not just to climb the Darwinian pyramid of highly competitive youth soccer.
- C. That’s fine for those who truly want to be there, but AYSO is for the vast majority of players and families who simply want to be able to play the world’s most popular game.
- D. And let’s challenge any notion that AYSO games are not competitive, or that somehow our focus on the experience, our disdain for standings, etc., means that we don’t care about teaching kids how to compete; most of you have seen enough AYSO games to know that our games are and can be very competitive.
- E. What makes us different is we believe that experience can be positive regardless of the outcome, and that it should be available to any kids who want it!

Slide #52: Use AYSO Resources

- i. We’ve gone over a lot today, and it can be overwhelming. But remember, there is a ton of material waiting for you online,
- ii. A professional staff at the National Office focused exclusively on marketing and development,
- iii. And an all-volunteer commission that is there to help you turn the tables and give you practical help too.
- iv.

Slide #53:

It adds up to this equation: (read slide)

Slide #54: We are AYSO

AYSO Program: Marketing
Lead Instructor: Marketing /
Development Staff or Commission
Members who have familiarity with
the Soccer Solutions Study on
which this presentation is based

“Rec” Is NOT a Four-Letter Word: How to Leverage Who We Are

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A. Together we can do this. So let's say it loud, and say it proud: WE ARE
AYSO!!!

Slide #55: Questions/Discussion.

AYSO Program: Marketing
Lead Instructor: Marketing /
Development Staff or Commission
Members who have familiarity with
the Soccer Solutions Study on
which this presentation is based

**“Rec” Is NOT a Four-Letter
Word: How to Leverage
Who We Are**

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