

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS OF SUPPORTER COMMUNITY OWNED CLUBS:

COMPETENCIES AND PROFILE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a growing movement for supporter led involvement in the ownership of community sports clubs. As more of these clubs become successful and climb through the leagues the need to have Chief Executives with the skills and competencies to lead the organisations is increasing.

This report focuses on the competencies and profile required to be a successful leader of a supporter community owned club. The nature of these clubs means that the alignment of the Chief Executives vision and values to those of the club are vital, as is the desire for community engagement and development.

This report identifies the key components required to be a successful leader of a supporter community owned club as:

Leadership and Management

- Provide strategic direction.
- Inspire and motivate others to achieve the club's vision.
- Manage conflicting priorities to deliver operational performance.
- Effectively manage volunteers.
- Establish and maintain effective relationship with Chair and Board.
- Effectively manage employment relationships between the company and employees

Financial Management

- Setting an appropriate annual budget.
- Implementing effective cost control measures.
- Managing varied income streams.
- Effective internal controls to manage cash effectively.
- Forward planning to cover revenue shortfalls.

Strategic Development

- Clarity around strategic direction.
- Work collegiately with the Board.
- Ensure resources are deployed on key strategic priorities.
- Communication of the strategy to key stakeholders.

Commercial Expertise & Business Development

- Create effective links with the local business community.
- Communicate the wider community benefit of the club
- Maximise commercial and sponsorship opportunities.

Governance

- Establish clarity between the role of the Board and the Executive.
- Create control mechanisms and assurance frameworks.
- Assisting the development of skills and expertise on the Board.
- Developing performance reporting systems for Board scrutiny.

Stakeholder Management and Development

- Connect with the local community.
- Establish strong links with local opinion formers and politicians.
- Create good relationships with the local media.
- Maintain effective links with the supporters and the Board.

Values and Principles

- Align their own values with those of the club.
- Communicating the values to the local community.
- Creating connectivity with supporters and other stakeholders.

The report concludes that there are many skills required to be a successful leader of a supporter community owned club, some of these can be acquired whilst others are core elements required in the role. In particular senior leaders must have highly developed leadership and management skills, they should be able to develop and deliver strategic proprieties, and they will need to understand governance and be able to develop assurance processes that enable the organisation to flourish.

The report also asks whether a senior leader of a football club has to be a supporter. It concludes that the individuals' competence and ability for the role should be the determining factor.

However, whether a fan of the club, or not, it is fundamentally clear that the commitment required to achieve in such a role requires an individual with a passion for sport and the wider community benefits that supporter community owned clubs contribute.

CONTENTS

	Page
Executive Summary	1
Acknowledgements	5
Terms of Reference	6
Introduction	7
Review Findings	
1. Defining Success	11
2. Leadership and Management	12
3. Financial Management	15
4. Strategic Development	17
5. Commercial Expertise and Business Development	19
6. Governance	20
7. Stakeholder Management & Development	22
8. Values and Principles	23
Conclusions	24
Appendix A – Management v Leadership	25
Appendix B – Job description and person specification	26

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- Erik Samuelson - Chief Executive, AFC Wimbledon
- Andy Walsh - General Manager, FC United of Manchester
- Lee Carter - Chief Executive, AFC Telford
- James Mathie - Development Manager, Supporters Direct

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW

The project brief was to interview a selection of successful leaders of supporter community owned clubs to establish what are the key ingredients of their success. With the aim of developing guidance for members clubs to use when they are recruiting for new senior managers, both interim and permanent.

The assignment involved interviewing football club Chief Executives that Supporters Direct had asked to take part in the study.

The output from the review is this report that looks at the competencies, personalities, skills and experience required to lead a supporters community owned club.

INTRODUCTION

Supporters Direct was formed in 2000 to 'promote sustainable spectator clubs based on supporter's involvement and community ownership'.

Supporters Direct describe¹ what they do as:

- Supporters Direct campaigns for the wider recognition of the social, cultural and economic value of sports clubs
- Sports clubs and competitions are increasingly being put at risk by short-term vested interests, poor financial management and inadequate standards of governance; we are the UK's leading body working to ensure that clubs are run responsibly and are financially sustainable
- Supporters Direct aims to create the conditions in which supporters can secure influence and ownership of sports clubs
- Supporters Direct provides guidance and support to groups in more than 16 countries throughout Europe
- Supporters Direct promotes the value of supporter ownership to sports fans, empowering them to set up supporters' trusts or become members of existing trusts
- Supporters Direct is a community benefit society, owned by its members

These activities across the UK have resulted in a number of key achievements² including:

- Supporters' trusts have now been established at over 170 clubs.
- Over 250,000 people are members of supporters' trusts.
- Supporters' trusts have now brought in well over £30 million of new finance into football and rugby league.

¹ <http://www.supporters-direct.org/page.asp?p=2225>

² <http://www.supporters-direct.org/page.asp?p=3977>

- 25 clubs are in ownership or control by supporters trusts.
- Over 100 supporters' trusts now have shareholdings in their clubs.
- Over 65 supporters' trusts have directors at their clubs.
- Supporters of nearly 70% of clubs in the top five divisions of football in England, and the top four divisions in Scotland have established supporters' trusts.
- Re-orientating clubs to deliver active community engagement.

Supporter owned clubs that are members of Supporters' Direct include:

AFC Telford United, AFC Wimbledon, Bramley Buffaloes (RL), Brentford FC, Chesham United, Chester FC, Clyde, Clydebank, Crusaders Football Athletic & Sports Club, Dundee FC, Enfield Town, Exeter City, FC United of Manchester, Fisher FC, Gretna, Hendon, Merthyr Town FC, Newark Town FC, Newport FC (IOW), Prescott Cables, Rochdale Hornets Rugby League, Runcorn Linnets, Scarborough, Stirling Albion, Telford Tigers.

With Supporter Trusts becoming increasingly more actively involved in the ownership of clubs it means that they have to recruit staff to manage the business. This review, therefore focuses on the identification of the core competencies and skills that are required to lead a commercially viable supporter community owned club.

Supporters Direct has developed four strategic briefing papers which provide an insight into the wider benefits to communities arising from the development of supporter led clubs. Briefing paper number 4 – 'Business Advantages of Supporter Community Ownership draws conclusions³ that are significant to this review, in summary these are:

- Sustainable Strategic Relationships – "It is clear that supporter community ownership creates long term, deep and sustainable partnerships with some key strategic partners".
- Sponsorship – "we can also see an increasing desire of sponsors to be associated with the principles of supporter community ownership as well as the community benefit obligations inherent in community benefit society ownership".
- Finance and Income – "Although supporter community owned clubs face an uphill struggle due to the ability of other clubs to spend beyond their means, they do have some advantages, notably in relation to raising finance".

³ Supporters Direct Briefing Note no.4 – Business Advantage of Supporter Community Ownership – page 49

- Volunteering – “It was very notable that out of 1700 supporters, the vast majority of those that volunteered were at community owned clubs”.
- Resilience – “There is some evidence that those who run supporter community owned clubs feel that they get given more leeway by supporters because of their ownership...”. “This ‘resilience’ is in part reliant on greater trust, openness and transparency in the running of supporter community owned clubs....”.

It can therefore be seen that running a supporter community owned club has advantages and challenges associated with the role. Not least, managing relationships with multiple stakeholders with high expectations of the long term viability of the club, and balancing this with the challenge of providing adequate resource to those managing the playing staff.

This review focussed on the following main competency areas:

- Leadership & Management
- Financial Management
- Strategic Development
- Commercial Expertise and Business Development
- Governance
- Stakeholder Management and Development

The catalyst that leads to supporter trusts being created and eventually taking control of clubs is varied. In this review the discussions have focussed on three clubs with different origins; AFC Wimbledon was formed following the decision of the owners of Wimbledon FC to physically move the club from its place of origin to Milton Keynes with the subsequent change of name to MK Dons; FC United of Manchester was established as a new club by a group of Manchester United supporters who had become disillusioned with the clubs owners; AFC Telford United was formed after the former club dissolved. Despite the difference in their origins these clubs have many similar characteristics.

REVIEW FINDINGS

Defining Success

Measuring successes in the context of a supporter community owned club is often significantly different from those that are owned by an individual or groups of individuals. In modern sport “successful clubs” are often portrayed by the media and supporters as those that have achieved outstanding results on the field. However, this myopic view, of success based purely on standings in league tables is often only maintained through significant financial investment.

In recent years “success” at the highest level of football has been based on the owner’s ability to spend exorbitant amounts on transfer fees and then financing player’s wages in excess of £100k per week.

However, “success” for community owned clubs is focussed on ensuring that (a) the club remains financially secure, (b) there is wider community benefits derived from the club, and (c) developing a winning team on the field is not achieved by placing the club’s finances at risk.

The clubs contributing to this review have all experienced success on the field, most notably AFC Wimbledon who were promoted in the 2010/11 season from the Conference Premier League to Football League Division Two. AFC Telford United have achieved three promotions in the last seven years, and FC United of Manchester have achieved three promotions in six years.

Equally, on the criteria of measuring success based on financial security the three clubs featured have achieved positive outcomes. So what are the skills required to deliver success at a community owned club?

A common characteristic of those interviewed during this review is that they did not envisage that at some point in their working life they would be running a football club. They arrived at their current positions from varied backgrounds, however they all shared a passion for supporter involvement in the running of football clubs, the well-being of the game and of course, the desire to see their own club succeed.

Leadership and Management

Community owned clubs are multi-faceted organisations with many different business functions. This diversity of activity, working towards a common aim, requires leadership to ensure that the vision and values of the club are espoused across the organisation.

Community owned clubs embarking on recruitment of senior staff for the first time will be experiencing organisational transformation. Kotter⁴ maintains that successful transformation is achieved through 70 to 90 percent leadership and 10 to 30 percent management. Appendix A shows how Kotter defines activities between leadership and management.

A strong feature of those contributing to this review was their ability to strategise the future direction of their club. Coupled with this was the ability to communicate their vision in a way that motivated and inspired others.

The ability to look beyond the immediate challenges and develop long-term strategies is particularly relevant when clubs are required to embark on major capital projects, for example, establishing a permanent location or ground development, as currently being experienced by AFC Wimbledon and FC United of Manchester.

In emphasising the role leadership plays, it should not be forgotten that the day to day operation of a club also requires the skills of a competent manager. The combination of being able to establish strategic direction, whilst also ensuring that day-to-day business activities are delivered is particularly relevant in community owned clubs where staff need to be multi-skilled.

The multi-disciplinary nature of community owned clubs brings additional challenges for the organisation's leader. This requires adaptability and flexibility of thinking, whilst it does not require the leader to have detailed experience of working in the various areas of the business, it does require someone able to quickly understand key issues and recognise areas that present business benefits or risk.

Supporters Direct Briefing Paper 4⁵ highlights the role that volunteering and participation plays in community owned clubs and includes in the findings that; *"Tapping into supporter volunteering can unlock a huge reservoir of skills amongst the supporter base that can be a genuine business advantage to the club, something that results in the club being more professionally run."*

⁴ John P Kotter (1996) *Leading Change*, Boston, Massachusetts, Harvard Business School Press

⁵ Supporters Direct Briefing Note no.4 – Business Advantage of Supporter Community Ownership – page 30

There are many similarities between the skills required to manage paid staff and volunteers, however, it should be recognised that there are also distinct differences between the two. Whilst paid staff often align their values to those of the organisation their primary motivation is usually, but not exclusively, financial reward. Whereas, volunteers are driven by their belief and commitment 'to the cause' and harnessing their support is often key to maintaining financial viability.

The not-for profit sector has wrestled for many years with the challenges of how to enable volunteers to succeed. Hind⁶ explains '*managers need to be sensitive to the relationship between paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will generally welcome regular contact with staff but they resist what they construe as interference*'.

Hind recommends that in recruiting volunteers similar processes are adopted to those used for paid staff. Including the development of job descriptions and person specification for a volunteer role. This ensures that the volunteers' skills and competence is best matched to the position and avoids disenchantment if the volunteer struggles to deliver the required performance.

Volunteers also present the challenge of not wanting to conform to the usual working practices, there is a risk that they will do aspects of roles that they prefer and leave other tasks uncompleted. It is therefore essential that the senior leader has the skills and competence to motivate a volunteer workforce. This includes finding ways to recognise the contribution that volunteers make to the organisation.

The same standards and rigour need to be applied to checking individual's suitability for a volunteer role. For example, checking if those involved in handling cash or stock have previous history of dishonesty, and ensuring that the appropriate level of Criminal Record Bureau checks are undertaken for those who will have access to children or vulnerable adults.

Erik Samuelson, Chief Executive of AFC Wimbledon, explained that volunteers play a vital and diverse role at the Club, undertaking roles varying from cleaning the stadium through to his own position as Chief Executive.

A constituent to success for a Chief Executive of a supporter community owned club is the ability to effectively manage the interface between the role of the executive (staff) and the role of the non-executive (the Board). Key to this is the creation of a sound relationship between the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive.

⁶ Andrew Hind, The Governance and Management of Charities

There needs to be clarity over the roles that will fall to the executive and those that will be retained by the Board. Equally there needs to be effective reporting mechanisms to allow the executive to regularly provide the Board with key performance information, this process should also provide the Board with assurance that operational risks are being effectively managed.

Key Components of Leadership and Management:

- Provide strategic direction.
- Inspire and motivate others to achieve the club's vision.
- Manage conflicting priorities to deliver operational performance.
- Effectively manage volunteers.
- Establish and maintain effective relationship with Chair and Board.
- Effectively manage the employment relationship between the company and employees.

Financial Management

Securing a sound financial platform is a significant challenge for the vast majority of football clubs. With supporter owned clubs the initial challenge is raising the funds to take control of the club, often this is a long-term aim and the campaign to raise the capital to secure ownership unites supporters in a common goal. The Supporters Direct Briefing Paper No.3 "Financing Supporter Community Ownership"⁷ provides case studies and examples of the means by which supporter ownership is achieved.

Once supporter trusts have secured ownership of their club those leading the organisation have to ensure that financial forecasts are achieved. On a day to day basis responsibility for financial matters rests with the club's Financial Director and having financial expertise on the Board is viewed as an essential criteria to success.

However, day to day monitoring of budgets and ensuring the finances of the club are managed effectively requires the Chief Executive to have a sound understanding of financial issues. Football clubs can have multiple sources of income streams, such as; gate receipts, sponsorship, advertising,

⁷ Supporters Direct Briefing paper No3 Financing Supporter Community Ownership available at <http://www.supporters-direct.org/pages/?p=8321>

retail catering and functions. The challenge is also around controlling costs, be these player wages, staff salaries, or the running costs of operating and maintaining a stadium.

A common feature of newly formed supporter community owned clubs is that they do not inherit a home stadium. Raising the capital to obtain land and build a stadium is often a protracted affair fraught with difficulties over funding and planning. Those leading such clubs have to balance the day-to-day running costs with establishing the resource to realise the long-term vision.

For many clubs the operation of their own stadium is the route to long-term financial stability, however in the absence of a permanent home they have to secure the use of another stadium to play their fixtures. Clearly this needs to be in the geographical locality of the Clubs fan base.

FC United of Manchester have been seeking a permanent stadium for a number of years. Initially they planned to build a stadium at Ten Acres, Newton Heath.⁸ However, this proposal hit difficulties and they are now pursuing a proposal to build a new community stadium in Moston⁹. In the 2011/12 season the club are playing their home fixtures at two local grounds, Gigg Lane home of Bury and Bower Fold home of Stayleybridge Celtic FC.¹⁰

This exemplifies the complexity associated with establishing a new Club and the need for the Chief Executive to have the attributes and expertise to manage varied financial arrangements.

A further challenge for the Chief Executive of a community supporter owned club is managing the inconsistent flow of income. In many commercial organisations it is possible to make reasonably accurate predictions for income. However, with sports where the main source of income is matchday revenue a number of factors could influence cash flow. For example, fixtures may be lost because of adverse weather conditions, home league matches may be lost during a successful campaign in a cup competition. Whilst with both of these examples the fixtures would be rescheduled this may lead to a run of home games which might impact on the supporters ability to pay admission charges or may result in a reduction in matchday spend.

Therefore, the leader of a community owned sports club needs to have the financial ability to plan for unforeseen circumstances, thereby ensuring the club can operate effectively during periods with limited income.

⁸ http://www.fc-utd.co.uk/press_article.php?articleid=11

⁹ http://www.fc-utd.co.uk/story.php?story_id=3845

¹⁰ http://www.fc-utd.co.uk/press_article.php?articleid=17

Key Components of Financial Management

- Setting a realistic annual budget.
- Implementing effective cost control measures.
- Managing varied income streams.
- Effective internal controls to manage cash effectively.
- Forward planning to cover revenue shortfalls.

Strategic Development

As identified earlier a key characteristic of a leader of a supporter owned club is the ability to provide strategic vision. The development of this vision needs clarity around strategic direction. The euphoria of securing ownership can soon turn into the stark reality that the club needs to function on a day to day basis.

Without a clear strategy, that both the Board and members sign up to, the club will lack direction and risk disjoint over future priorities. Boards will often look to the senior executives at the club to create the strategy, or work collegiately with the board on development of the strategic direction.

Therefore, having a senior leader able to articulate clarity of vision and steer the Board to common agreement on the priorities for the club will be a key asset.

Having a collective understanding of what the strategic priorities are will enable the senior leader to focus resource appropriately and also enable the Board to measure performance against agreed targets.

An example of a club's strategic priorities comes from FC United of Manchester where the Board established seven core principles to the way the Club would operate¹¹:

1. The Board will be democratically elected by its members.
2. Decisions taken by the membership will be decided on a one member, one vote basis.
3. The club will develop strong links with the local community and strive to be accessible to all, discriminating against none.

¹¹ <http://www.fc-utd.co.uk/manifesto.php>

4. The club will endeavour to make admission prices as affordable as possible, to as wide a constituency as possible.
5. The club will encourage young, local participation - playing and supporting - whenever possible.
6. The Board will strive wherever possible to avoid outright commercialism.
7. The club will remain a non-profit organisation.

The club's strategy is then linked closely to these principles. Significant emphasis is placed in maintaining community engagement and the club operates a pay what you can afford scheme for season tickets.¹²

Key Components of Strategic Development

- Clarity around strategic direction.
- Work collegiately with the Board.
- Ensure resources are deployed on key strategic priorities.
- Communication of the strategy to key stakeholders.

Commercial Expertise & Business Development

It is important for the leaders of a supporter community owned club to have a level of commercial awareness and the skills to identify business development opportunities. Providing strategic direction and clarity of leadership will enable others to explore and deliver sponsorship and other business opportunities.

The Supporters Direct Briefing Note 4 – the Business Advantages of Supporter Community Ownership in Football – highlights¹³ that most community owned clubs have higher attendance than their competitors at the same level. This increased support makes these clubs a more attractive partner for commercial organisations.

¹² <http://www.fc-utd.co.uk/seasontickets.php>

¹³ Supporters Direct Briefing Note no.4 – Business Advantage of Supporter Community Ownership - Page 17

The briefing note also recognises the reputational value of sponsorship associated with a club owned by its supporters and the local community. The ethos of community owned sports clubs and their relationship to the wider community is seen as an attractive proposition to commercial partners. The co-operative nature of these clubs and the 'feel good factor' associated with individuals taking control of a key component within the local community, means that commercial partners and sponsors want to be associated with the club to establish a bond with the supporters, thereby demonstrating their corporate social responsibilities.

Additionally the legal obligation of a Community Benefit Society to benefit their local community increases the potential goodwill from sponsors. Harnessing that goodwill through the development of strong links with the Club is important.

In some cases local sponsors may have had previous engagement with the Club prior to it becoming community owned. Therefore, the club's senior executive may need to re-establish this relationship thereby creating the opportunity for other staff at the Club to manage the day-to-day sponsorship relationships.

Key Components of Commercial Expertise & Business Development

- Create effective links with the local business community.
- Communicate the wider community benefit of the club.
- Maximise commercial and sponsorship opportunities.

Governance

Good governance is essential to the success of any organisation. Considerable efforts have been made in the corporate and public sectors to create understanding of the need for sound governance structures. The Audit Commission Corporate Governance report "*Corporate Governance – Improvement in Trust in local public service*"¹⁴ defines corporate governance as "The framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and wider community within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their functions to achieve their objectives."

Clearly supporter community owned clubs are not public sector bodies, however the Audit Office definition of accountability to stakeholders and the wider community and the taking of decisions and control mechanisms that result in achievement of objectives are pertinent to the success of clubs.

¹⁴ Available at <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/AuditCommissionReports/NationalStudies/CorporateGovernance.pdf>

Therefore, having a leader with an understanding of the need for organisations to have risk management and internal controls, structures and process, policies and procedures and appropriate reporting mechanisms is key to success.

Equally there are parallels to draw from models of governance in the not-for-profit sector. In the education sector school governing bodies have a number of statutory responsibilities, including, promoting high standards, setting targets, deciding strategy, management of budgets, appointing senior staff. School Governors have a strategic role in the organisation but also act a “critical friend” to ensure that the head teacher and staff deliver operational targets.

The Charity Commission has developed guidance on the “Hallmarks of an Effective Charity”¹⁵. One of the hallmarks is an effective board, this is described as “An effective charity run by a clearly identifiable board or trustee body that has the right balance of skills and experience, acts in the best interest of the charity and its beneficiaries. Understands its responsibilities and has systems in place to exercises them properly.”

The separation of role between executives (staff) and non-executives (board-members) is a key constituent to the ability of the board to hold the executive to account on the delivery of operational performance and strategic priorities.

The involvement of fans in running football clubs is recognised in the All Party Parliamentary Football Group report (2009) ‘English Football and its Governance’¹⁶ the report states “By loading the top level of governance more in favour of people who love the and have the interests of the club at heart, we envisage that, as well as increasing accountability within club governance, clubs will begin to focus on developing a long-term model, eliminating short-termism and making matters more financially sustainable.”

Clearly supporter community owned clubs need to encourage fans to engage in the clubs governance. Providing those individuals with the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their governance role is an essential element of effectiveness. Therefore, having a senior leader with a

¹⁵Hallmarks of an Effective Charity available at <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/guidance/cc10text.pdf#page=3>

¹⁶

http://www.allpartyfootball.com/APFG_Report_on_English_Football_&_Its_Governance_April_2009%5B1%5D.pdf

clear understanding of governance, ability to create effective assurance frameworks and work on the development of the board is a key component to success.

A key aspect of the role of the Board is to scrutinise the executives' delivery of operational and strategic objectives. A good Chief Executive will encourage and facilitate Board involvement and scrutiny. Creating an environment where the Board constructively challenges and supports the executive will enable the club to thrive.

Key Components of Governance

- Establish clarity between the role of the Board and the Executive.
- Create control mechanisms and assurance frameworks.
- Assisting the development of skills and expertise on the Board.
- Developing performance reporting systems for Board scrutiny.

Stakeholder Management & Development

Leaders of community owned clubs have a variety of stakeholders to manage, including; non-executive boards, trust members, sponsors, the local community and local opinion formers.

Clearly having an effective relationship with non-executives and board members is essential if the organisation is to flourish. However, the key challenge is to ensure that whilst managing such relationships the focus remains on delivering the strategic goals. It is not uncommon for stakeholders to have conflicting priorities for example the conflict between providing success on the field and maintaining a strong financial position.

Equally there may be occasions, such as the development of a new stadium, when relationships with the local community and local politicians will have greater significance to the delivery a strategic priority.

The skills and ability to communicate with a diverse range of stakeholders is a critical element of the role. The senior leader will be the main point of contact in many clubs. Their ability to communicate at the right level will be key to establishing long-term relationships with the local community, sponsors and opinion formers.

Key Component of Stakeholder Management and Development

- Connect with the local community.
- Establish strong links with local opinion formers and politicians.
- Create good relationships with the local media.
- Maintain effective links with the supporters and the Board.

Values and Principles

Supporter led community owned clubs are values driven organisations. They exist to deliver a goal that is for the wider benefit of the local community. A Chief Executive of such an organisation needs to be able to align their values with those of the club.

Equally important is the ability of the Chief Executive to promote the clubs' values in the wider community. This engagement will generate understanding of the ethos of the club and facilitate closer bonds between the club and the community.

The achievement of the connectivity with the local community, the relationship with the supporters and management of the wider stakeholder engagement will be key to defining the success of the Chief Executive.

Key Component of Values and principles

- Align their own values with those of the club.
- Communicating the values to the local community.
- Creating connectivity with supporters and other stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

There are many skills required to be a successful leader of a supporter community owned club, some of these can be acquired whilst others are core elements required in the role. In particular senior leaders must have highly developed leadership and management skills, they should be able to develop and deliver strategic proprieties, and they will need to understand governance and be able to develop assurance processes that enable the organisation to flourish.

Part of the profile of the successful leader will be a need to be resilient to pressure, have clarity of vision, the inter-personal skills to forge strong relationships with diverse stakeholder groups and flexibility to develop new skills.

Importantly, given the nature of the community nature of supporter community owned clubs the individual leader should have the skills to create trust and understanding of the club's vision within the local community.



Whilst recognising the senior leaders need to have a degree of ability in financial management, business development and commercial skills, having qualifications or expertise in these areas are not core to the role. The expert input to these functions can be provided by others in the organisation and if need be acquired externally.

Finally, the key question. Does a senior leader of a football club have to be a supporter? There are those that will argue that they should. Those contributing to this review considered the individuals competence and ability for the role should be the determining factor.

Whether a fan of the club, or not, it is fundamentally clear that the commitment required to achieve in such a role requires an individual with a passion for sport and the wider community benefits that supporter community owned clubs contribute.

APPENDIX A

MANAGEMENT versus LEADERSHIP

MANAGEMENT	LEADERSHIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning and budgeting: establishing detailed steps and timetables for achieving needed results, then allocating the resources necessary to make it happen. ▪ Organising and staffing: establishing some structure for accomplishing plan requirements, staffing that structure with individuals, delegating responsibility and authority for carrying out the plan, providing policies and procedures to help guide people and creating methods or systems to monitor implementation. ▪ Controlling and problem solving: monitoring results, identifying deviations from plan, then planning and organising to solve these problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing direction: developing a vision of the future – often the distant future – and strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision. ▪ Aligning people: communicating direction in words and deeds to all those whose cooperation may be needed so as to influence the creation of teams and coalitions that understand the vision and strategies and that accept their validity. ▪ Motivating and inspiring: energising people to overcome major political, bureaucratic and resource barriers to change by satisfying basic, but often unfulfilled, human needs.
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produces a degree of predictability and order and has the potential to consistently produce the short-term results expected by various stakeholders (e.g., for customers, always being on time; for stockholders, being on budget) 	<p>Produces change, often to a dramatic degree and has the potential to produce extremely useful change (e.g., new products that customers want, new approaches to labour relations that help make a firm more competitive)</p>

Adapted from Kotter. J.P (1996 p26) Leading Change

APPENDIX B

**CEO for a Supporter Community Owned Football Clubs
Model Person Specification and Job Description****Background**

In 2011 Supporters Direct commissioned an investigation into the competencies and profile of successful leaders of supporter community owned football clubs. This model person specification and job description summarises the critical elements of that report and presents them as a practical tool for any club looking to recruit a new CEO.

JOB DESCRIPTION

There is a growing movement for supporter led involvement in the ownership of football clubs and as these become successful and move through the leagues the need to have Chief Executives/senior management with the skills and competencies to lead the organisations is increasing. Measuring success for supporter owned clubs is significantly different to those owned by an individual or groups of individual shareholders.

Success for community owned clubs is focused on ensuring that the club remains financially secure; there is wider community benefits derived from the club; and the development of a winning team on the pitch is not achieved by placing the club's finances at risk.

Job purpose

To provide overall leadership and management for (Name of Club) to take it forward as a supporter community owned club.

Reports to: Chair of governors and board.

Responsible for: Team of paid staff and volunteers

Information on the specific club

(To be amended accordingly)

Key competencies for the role:

Rather than a description of tasks, it is more important to look for the right competencies. The key competencies for success are:

- Leadership and Management
- Financial Management
- Strategic Development
- Commercial Expertise and Business Development
- Governance
- Stakeholder Management and Development
- Values and Principles

In more detail the Chief Executive will need to:

Leadership and Management

- Provide overall strategic direction for the club.
- Be able to inspire and motivate others to achieve the clubs vision
- Manage conflicting priorities to deliver operational performance
- Have experience of managing paid staff and volunteers

Financial management

- Be an experienced budget manager including able to set realistic and appropriate targets
- Manage a variety of income streams
- Implement effective cost control measures and effective internal controls to manage cash effectively
- Identify and plan to cover revenue shortfalls

Strategic Development

- Provide strong strategic direction for the club
- Work collegiately with the board to identify priorities and deliver business plan
- Ensure resources are deployed on key strategic priorities
- Communicate and get buy in of the strategy from key stakeholders

Commercial Expertise and Business Development

- Create effective links with the local business community
- Communicate the wider community benefit of the club
- Maximise commercial and sponsorship opportunities

Governance

- Establish clarity between the role of the Board and the Executive
- Create control mechanisms and assurance frameworks
- Assist the development of relevant skills and expertise on the Board
- Develop performance reporting systems for Board scrutiny

Stakeholder Management and Development

- Connect with the local community
- Establish strong links with local opinion formers and politicians
- Create good relationships with the local media
- Maintain effective links with the supporters and the Board

Values and Principles

- Align their own values with those of the club
- Communicate these values to the local community
- Behave in a way that demonstrates the clubs values (walk the talk)
- Create connectivity with supporters and other stakeholders

PERSON SPECIFICATION

To help with the selection of suitable candidates, it is recommended you focus on experience in the following areas:

The successful candidate will have:

- Experience of managing relationships with a variety of stakeholders. Examples of possible stakeholders include supporters, local businesses, sponsors, non executive board, trust members, local opinion formers. (The successful candidate could have gained this expertise through working for a charity or in the public sector.)

- Experience of people management ideally including managing volunteers. There are many similarities between the skills to manage staff and volunteers but there are also distinct differences. Volunteers are driven by their belief and commitment “to the cause”. Successful managers will need to understand the different motivations and challenges involved in managing volunteers. This is most likely to have come from experience as a volunteer themselves or through managing volunteers in a not for profit organisation.
- Understanding of complex finances and multiple budgets and income streams - experience of managing on a shoe string. Securing a sound financial platform is a significant challenge for the majority of football clubs. There is also a challenge of controlling costs. (Possible relevant experience might come from managing complex contracts within private, public or not for profit sectors.) A common feature of a supporter owned clubs is also the need to source a new stadium as they do not inherit a home stadium. This may include raising capital to obtain land and manage the build of a new stadium.
- Commercial expertise and skills to identify business development opportunities which might include providing strategic direction and clarity of leadership to enable others to explore and deliver sponsorship and other business opportunities.
- Change management experience. It is likely that if the community owned club is embarking on recruitment of senior staff for the first time they are experiencing organisational transformation. The ability to form a clear strategy for the future direction of their club will be important.
- Knowledge and understanding of governance (the CEO will need to influence the board and guide them through decision making – there are many similarities with the not for profit sector and experience here would be beneficial). CEO will need to develop a sound relationship with the Chair and work closely with the Chair and non-executive board including developing effective reporting mechanisms on key performance information and assurance regarding operational risks.
- Flexibility and adaptability to manage the multi disciplinary nature and challenges of a community owned club in order to quickly understand key issues and recognise areas that present business benefits or risk to the club.

The CEO may also have a:

- Passion for sport and an understanding of the wider community benefits that supporter owned clubs contribute. (This is quite a unique role and passion for the game may be a strong driver for those who are involved with the club and an empathy with this would be desirable.)

How might you find suitable candidates?

The mix of competencies and skills is very complex and yet you will only have the financial resources to pay them a relatively low salary. So do these sorts of people exist and if so where and how do you find them.

1. Experience counts. It is unlikely that someone with inexperience of management is going to have the depth to draw on. Passion is not the critical factor. People in mid or later careers are a more likely target group.
2. Business experience is not enough. Whilst this is a job running a business, it is much more complex. Managing volunteers, being in the public eye and managing multiple stakeholders adds a new dimension. Seek out people who have evidence of this: business executives who have also worked in the public sector; public sector employees with experience of running a business.

To find people who meet these 2 key criteria you can try advertising but you will also need to seek out networks which support or provide for them. Do you have a large local employer that has links with its retired managers? Would the local branch of the professional accounting bodies or the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development or the Institute of Marketing be able to help? Are there networks of retired members of the police force, or head teachers or the armed forces you can contact? Or you could try social networking sites such as Linked In. Finally there are a small but growing number of organisations that support social enterprises and charities.

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