Data-led
Sports Marketing
Checklist

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Are You Ready?

Sports businesses face new challenges around data and marketing, following privacy and cookie policy changes. These will make it difficult for sports organisations to fully reach their potential. The tricky part is that more changes are likely to come, making collecting customer data for marketing and business expansion more difficult in the future.

You need to ensure you have the right tools in place and the knowledge to prepare for these changes. We have created a data-led marketing checklist to empower you to identify potential issues you may face when marketing to your fans.

This guide is perfect for marketing leaders in all sports-related organisations looking to reach more customers and communicate with the right audiences.

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"The team at AccuraCast have been fantastic. They offer guidance and advice in simple and easy to understand terms. And most importantly, they get results."

DANIS ROBERTS,
SENIOR DIGITAL PRODUCER

Marylebone Cricket Club
Lord's Cricket Ground

Before we start, a bit about AccuraCast ...

We help sports brands grow globally by winning more leads and sales via online channels. We do this through data-led search, display, and social media marketing.

We have an outstanding reputation and are proud of our record of delivering proven and exceptional results.

Building on our core values of creativity, innovation, and data intelligence, combined with our extensive experience in the industry, we deliver high-performing search, programmatic display, video, and social media marketing campaigns for some of the biggest global sports brands.

Sports Brands We've Helped Grow

1. IS PRIVACY PROTECTED WHEN COLLECTING CUSTOMER DATA?

Consumers today expect something of value in exchange for their data. And they require transparency from brands regarding how this data will be used. Your fans need to trust you; otherwise they're unlikely to buy from you. They also need you to guarantee the safety of their data and to safeguard their privacy in all your online services.

In a survey we commissioned, we found out that 88% of consumers have concerns regarding cookies and privacy. Make sure this doesn't affect your ability to earn more fan data.

Solution:

- **Provide clarity & link to privacy policies wherever you collect personal information**

- **Build trust signals early on in your customer journey**

- **Invest in encryption and data security**

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2. WILL YOU BE ABLE TO ACCESS ALL THE VITAL DATA YOU NEED?

Following the scheduled elimination of Universal Analytics, do you have a way of securing your historical website visitor data? You will lose all the audiences you've built based on visits to your website, and could risk having to guess the behaviours and trends of your consumers, which in the fast-paced world of sports, is extremely risky.

Do your marketing and analytics specialists have the skills to use a new analytics tool? Make sure you're equipped to access the data you've spent so long collecting, and are prepared to switch to using Google Analytics 4.

Solution:

- **Setup GA4 (or other Analytics solutions) right away**
- **Populate new online audience segments in GA4 (or alternatives)**
- **Backup or export Universal Analytics historical data**

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3. HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED SERVER-SIDE TRACKING?

With tracking across apps being restricted, do you have an alternative way of sourcing important data? It's important to identify and grow your target audience lists reliably whilst abiding by recent changes imposed by providers like Apple & Google.

Server-side tracking bypasses the issue of blocked third-party cookies by allowing your server to communicate directly with the ad platform every time a user interacts with your website. You can then track all the events that are important to your organisation, such as ticket sales, merchandise purchases or fan subscriptions.

Solution:

- **Setup server-side tracking for GA4, Google Ads & Facebook Ads**

- **Control how much data you share, and when you share it**

- **Verify your domain on Meta Business Manager & declare events you must measure**

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4. HOW ARE YOU CLEANING UP, UNIFYING & PROCESSING DATA?

Is your most important data accessible to you from a single source, and are you able to utilize it effectively? From initially becoming aware of your sports organisation to becoming an integral part of your ecosystem, your fans go on a journey, and it's important to be optimising the data you've collected every step of the way.

You must make sure you have a detailed marketing strategy, unifying data across multiple platforms and at various stages in the fan lifecycle, so you can improve the lifetime value of your customers.

Solution:

- **Map your fan journey, how their data flows and identify data gaps**

- **Track when fans engage or purchase offline**

- **Plan a strategy to unify all your data for marketing**

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5. HAVE YOU GOT A PLAN TO SUPPLEMENT AUDIENCE LOSS?

Social audiences don't belong to you – they belong to the platforms. With changes to privacy and data handling, reaching these fans will become more challenging. Audiences will be lost over time without the correct strategies to take ownership.

To continue engaging fans and staying on top of trends, you'll need to identify ways to collect data, even when audience numbers fluctuate. By using cutting-edge data intelligence methods, you'll be able to find new audiences regularly and remarket to your current fans more efficiently.

Solution:

- **Plan for smaller audiences on social, display, and remarketing**

- **Where possible, increase audience retention times**

- **Optimise for earlier stages in the fan journey if audience numbers are too small**

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6. ARE YOU COLLECTING MORE FIRST-PARTY DATA?

Privacy changes introduced with iOS 14.5 and third-party cookie blocking on Chrome are already making it more difficult for sports brands to target fans and collect essential marketing data. This will hinder your ability to create content that feels personal to your fans and stand out from your competitors.

You need to implement strategies to collect more first-party data – names, emails, phone numbers, gender, location etc. – from visitors, fans, and customers if you wish to continue marketing to these audiences as efficiently as you're used to.

Solution:

- Grow your fan database with offers, giveaways etc.

- Create new opportunities to acquire more fan information

- Consolidate data across platforms and business units to increase audience sizes

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7. ARE YOUR REMARKETING CAMPAIGNS OPTMISED?

GDPR sets limits on how long you can reasonably hold on to personal information. Customers have interacted with your brand for several reasons and you have insight into their motivation through analytics and cookies. Don't lose these fans!

To keep them engaged and build a strong fan community, you need to optimise your remarketing. Whether you're marketing a sports club, ticket vendor, merchandise retailer, or a sports governing body, keeping your audience engaged and entertained is crucial.

Solution:

- Identify disengaged customer segments

- Plan re-engagement campaigns specifically timed for low-activity periods

- Invest in paid remarketing on multiple channels

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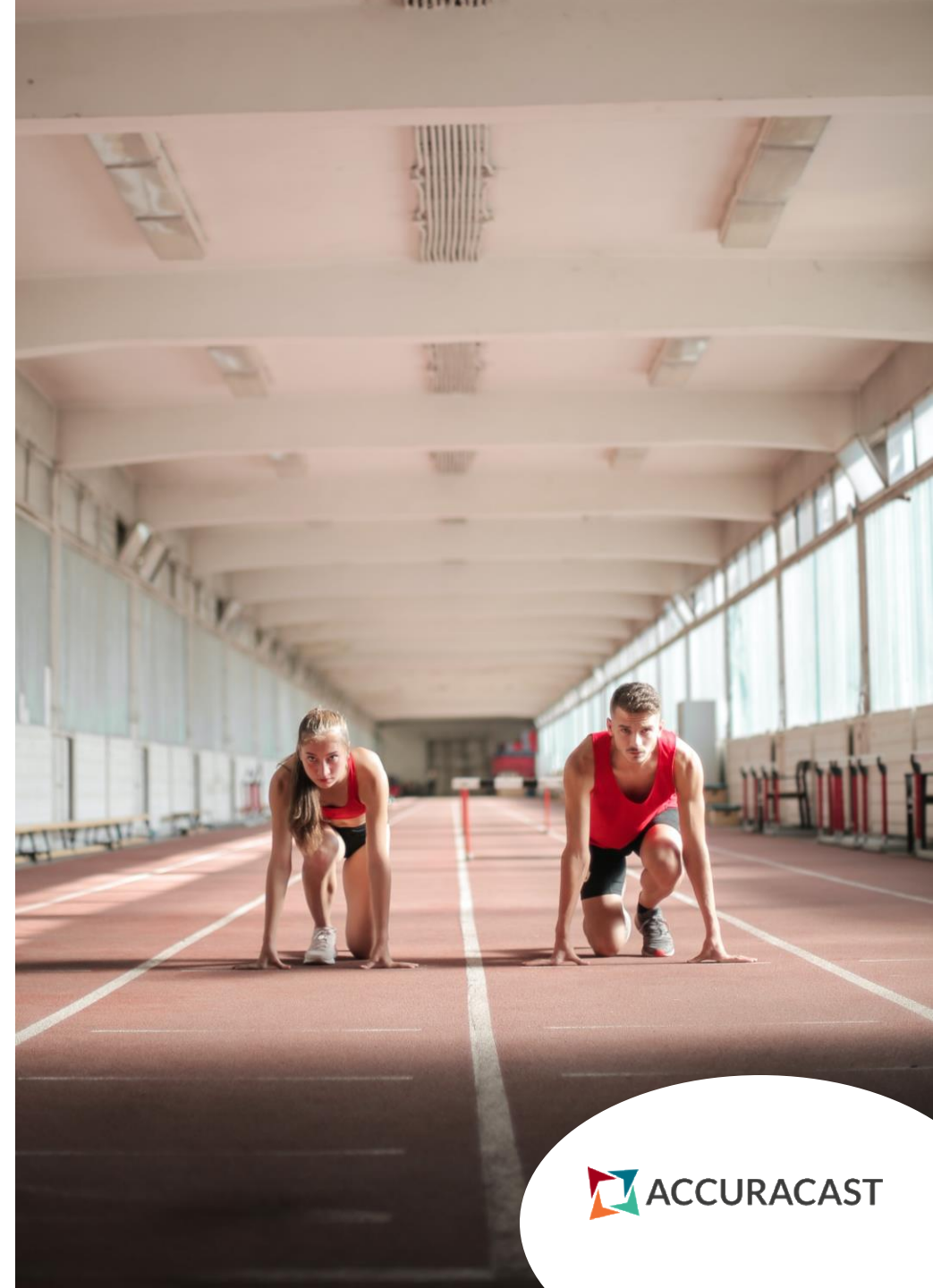
8. ARE YOU USING CRM DATA FOR PERFORMANCE MARKETING?

Not all important fan interactions happen on your website. Even on-site interactions that are spread out over time are difficult to track. Measuring many of these interactions – e.g. in-stadium sales, subscription renewals, pay-per-view purchases etc. – is very important.

This data typically is available in CRM(s), but isn't always used to optimise campaign performance, which means you're missing opportunities to drive results that really matter to your organisation

Solution:

- **Build solutions to feed CRM data to online platforms such as Meta & Google**

- **Measure offline conversion events based on CRM data**

- **Create campaigns optimised to drive more of these important offline conversions**

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9. DO YOU DRIVE PERFORMANCE WITH MARKETING APIs?

Marketing APIs gives you greater control of your ad campaigns and enable advanced automation using both online and offline data that's most important to your business.

By using dynamic creative, data-based audiences, real-time optimisation, and lifetime value-based bidding from CRM data, you'll be able to expand and engage with the most valuable fans and consumers.

Solution:

- **Set up signals to measure fan lifetime value**

- **Create ad campaigns optimised to specifically target similar high-value fans**

- **Personalise and dynamically update content for fans at scale**

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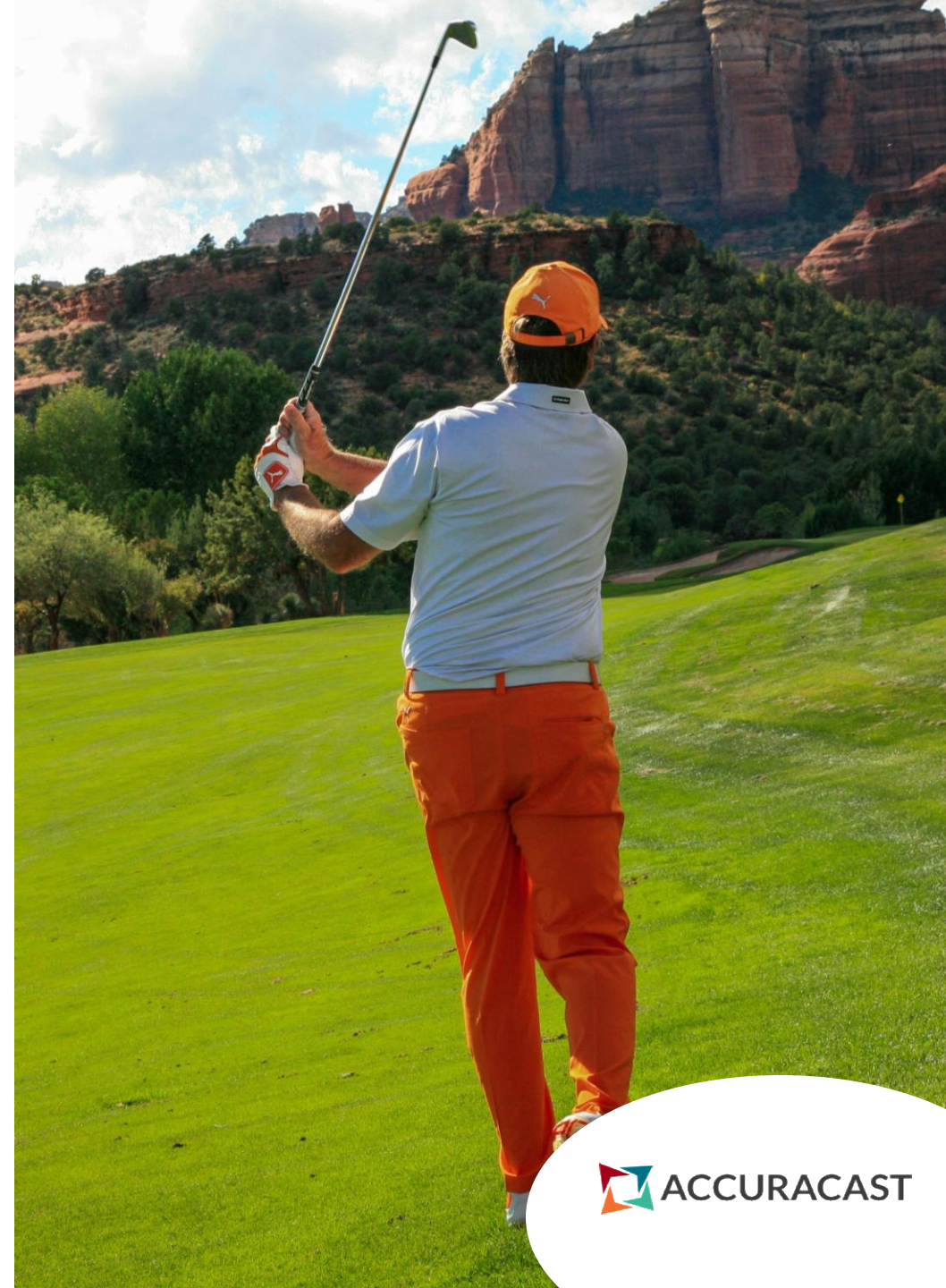
10. DOES YOUR TEAM HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE & CAPABILITIES YOU NEED IN 2023?

Upskilling your marketing teams on GA4 and advanced marketing with data empowers them to be more effective with your campaigns. Your marketing and PR can yield even better results with the right guidance on utilising the data you collect, resulting in more support for your fans in those crucial moments when they're looking for content, information, tickets, and merchandise.

Solution:

- **Invest in training programmes for key marketing personnel**

- **Create guides for marketing & PR teams to understand new tools**

- **Establish processes to setup audiences, and include new data into campaigns**

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Worried about bringing your A-Game?

Missed something from the list? Don't worry.

We provide a range of solutions and technical services to grow your sports brand through the use of efficient data-led marketing.

The Ball's In Your Court

If you need support fulfilling this checklist or improving your marketing processes with data, then call us on 0800 019 6813 or email us.