

HMC
Den Bosch



Promotion Plan for Chess Club HMC Den Bosch

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12-6-2018

Management summary

This project focused on developing a promotion plan for the chess club HMC Den Bosch in order to attract new members, specifically young members. During the recent years, HMC Den Bosch has been suffering from a declining number of memberships, especially among the youth. As a result, both the financial position as their competitive position has decreased as well. Hence, the following question was the research question of this project: ‘How can chess club HMC attract new members, especially aged 6 to 18 years via promotion?’

In order to find out what the most beneficial promotion plan for HMC is with respect to attracting new members, more specifically youth members, several qualitative researches have been conducted. First, a questionnaire was given to current members to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the club. Secondly, a number of parents at an elementary school was asked to fill out a questionnaire concerning their opinions on chess. Thirdly, three interviews were conducted with different chess clubs in North-Brabant to compare developments and club’s activities towards attracting new members. Lastly, the demographics of Den Bosch was examined to have a better image of HMC’s potential new members.

The results of this research showed that there is currently too little guidance and attention for new members. In addition, the club members acknowledge that there should be someone responsible for promotional activities. Besides, the questionnaires from parents indicate that informing parents about the benefits of chess and the presence of a chess club might stimulate them to send their children to a chess club. Finally, interviews with other clubs demonstrated that socio-economic characteristics of the city are important factors when attracting new members, as well as the contribution fee.

To conclude, the declining number of memberships can be partly contributed to the fact that the club has not assigned a person or group responsible for guiding and welcoming new members or promotional/marketing activities. Therefore, we would recommend having this function fulfilled by the next chess season. Furthermore, a recommendation would be to organize more events and activities for children and parents to inform them about chess and to teach them the game. Also, ‘knowledge migrants’ are more likely to send their children to chess clubs, so this can be a focus group for promotional activities as well. Lastly, the club should focus more on socio-economic characteristics of the club and to their location. This could include searching for a cheaper location for club nights and trainings in order to decrease the contribution fee for children to attract more new members.

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Chapter 1: Description of the background and purpose of the project

Background of the association

HMC (Hertogstad Max Euwe Combinatie) is a non-profit chess club located in 's-Hertogenbosch. It was established in 1937 and celebrated its 80th anniversary in 2017. HMC is competing with five different teams in competitions, such as the Dutch or Brabant league. The strongest team, HMC1, has been competing in the highest Dutch league for last 15 years. Moreover, the club provides chess lessons for children. Every Friday the club is open from 6pm till midnight to enable its members to play chess and compete for the club cup. The club's motto is 'groot, sterk en gezellig', which can be translated to 'big, strong, and fun'. The club currently has 105 members currently. According to the data from the club, the age range is defined as following:

between 12-18 years old: 18 members (secondary school),

< 12 years: 16 members (elementary school),

> 18 years old: 71 members.

Background of the project

As the number of memberships, especially youth memberships, has been decreasing over the last years, the financial position of the club is endangered. This decline is most likely a result of a lack of marketing and promotion activities of HMC to attract new members. In addition, some sponsors which have made big contributions to the club for the past years have discontinued their support. The last and biggest sponsor of the club stopped its support in 2017. HMC's financial position is important to keep the club alive and support their teams in playing in high leagues. Moreover, chess is a brain-sport which improves logic, calculation, problem solving as well as strategic thinking. With HMC's mission to teach chess-minded children and support talented players in their chess career, the club contributes to society. It would be a loss for 's-Hertogenbosch if the club could no longer pursue this mission. Therefore, this project will focus on developing a promotion plan for HMC Den Bosch to attract new memberships, especially focusing on young memberships. Together with the board, it is decided to focus mainly on organizing and promoting an 'open day', as this was never organized before. Hence, the following question will be the point of focus during our project: 'How can chess club HMC attract new members, especially aged 6 to 18 years via promotion, more specifically an open day?'

Expected results

By developing and executing a specific promotion plan for the club, we aim to help HMC by recruiting new young members. This promotion plan will be based on data retrieved from current members, opinions of parents, interviews with other chess clubs and data of *Centraal bureau voor Statistiek* (CBS; Statistics

Netherlands). By analyzing this data, we aim to sketch the environment for chess in Den Bosch and target possible members the best as possible. In addition, our goal is to retrieve several insights from this data to formulate long-term recommendations for future promotion activities for HMC. We expect to have around 50 people visiting the open day, with the goal to have them enlisted as a member for the next season. Unfortunately, we cannot follow the future results due to the project's scope. Yet, we define our definite goal as attracting at least three new enthusiastic children during the scope of the project to the HMC chess club.

Structure of this paper

In chapter 2, theoretical papers concerning the benefits of chess and the importance of marketing relevant for our research will be discussed. In chapter 3, the methodology of the several enquiries and interviews will be covered. The main results and findings will be discussed in chapter 4, and conclusions will be drawn in chapter 5. In addition, the project's limitations, and recommendations will be presented in the final paragraph.

Chapter 2: Description of relevant theoretical framework/concepts

Over the past years, an inadequacy in promotional activities is associated with fewer memberships among the category four till eighteen years at the chess club HMC Den Bosch. Cross-country comparisons and the underlying trends suggest that the membership of children among the category four till eighteen years in chess clubs is growing (Internetschaak nieuw verschijnsel, 2017). This is in contrast with the membership of adults, which shows a declining trend with an average of 3,2% (NOC*NSF, 2017).

Currently, there is an absence of strategic marketing and promotion at HMC Den Bosch. More specifically, the chess club does not examine the needs of existing members nor modify the existing trends in memberships and for this reason the club cannot determine how to reach potential members best. This chapter will focus on important theory of marketing planning, how to attract new members for the club, and on the benefits of chess, so that the results can be used in the promotion plan.

Marketing planning

To set up our research on how to gain memberships for the chess club, the effects of a change in marketing planning will be examined. It is proven by Shilbury, Quick, Westerbeek, & Funk (2009) that clubs have a significant influence on gaining new memberships through marketing activities and promotion. First of all, the main goal of chess club Den Bosch is to focus on increasing the long-term consumer retention and incorporation in the age category of four till eighteen. As the main promotion activity in this research is to organize and promote an open day, the most effective method for promoting an open day should be examined. A study of Snyder on channel effectiveness shows that printed flyers were the most appealing and efficient, as the costs are low, and the distribution coverage is high (Snyder, 1990). Now, we can formulate our first proposition:

P1: By promoting the chess club to the target group via flyering, HMC can increase awareness for the club and the open day and consequently gain new members.

Memberships

According to the research of Bee and Lynn (2006) sport clubs can actively increase memberships through three different marketing stages: compliance, identification and internalization. To improve the compliance stage, the Chess Club Den Bosch can positively affect interaction with friends, family, other sport teams and the member itself. This leads to a growing flow of support and an increased ability for the member's strives to achieve goals. To boost the identification face, the Chess Club Den Bosch should anchor relationships through the club success or failure between players. Identification of individual members leads

to a psychological attachment with the sport and club itself. Identification can be influenced through external circumstances, such as visible and attractive services. For instance, club activities to celebrate the club's success for all ages. Alternatively, the club could emphasize using role models for children as the member is acting within a role defined by identification. If the sport relationship does not provide desired or satisfying opportunities and examples, the relationship will be abandoned (Kahle et al. 1996).

To enhance internalization, the Chess Club Den Bosch must promote values that are similar to their target customers. These values must be viewed as credible and trustworthy. The club could actively promote value relevance and agreements by training coaches the value agreements and to certain an open relationship between the club and its members. Strongly emphasizing values as respect, hospitality, openness and passion for the chess game, most efficiently enhances the relationships at this stage.

Furthermore, several other elements can affect chess consumer attitudes and behavior toward entering a membership with a certain chess club, such as identification, voluntary involvement, a positively perceived collective solidarity, trust and shared values between the club and member (Schlesinger & Nagel, 2015). This research also shows that other elements, including individual factors such as age, gender, and duration of membership do not have a significant influence on membership. Sport consumers are often actively involved to the sport organization and their commitment to the sport organization is often displayed through their voluntary participation in competitions and activities within the club (Bee & Lynn, 2006). As a result, to capture and maintain membership among the age category four till eighteen, promotional activities should be implemented carefully. Therefore, our second proposition is as follows:

P2: In order to capture and maintain memberships, the club should focus on expressing specific values in promotional activities such as solidarity and commitment.

Benefits of chess

Over the recent decades, many researches have been conducted on examining the benefits of playing chess and whether it increases a person's intelligence. Regarding intelligence, according to Gobet & Campitelli (2005) children playing chess tend to be more intelligent than non-chess playing children. Also, their research shows that there is a small correlation between chess skills among young children and their intelligence. However, Bibalíc, McLeod & Gobet (2006) claimed that intelligence only has a small influence on young children's chess skills as it largely depends on the amount of practice. This claim is supported by Gobet & Sala (2016) stating that children playing chess at an early age might develop certain skills that can be shared with other domains at elementary schools, specifically mathematical domains.

Nevertheless, this statement is only valid when children have had a minimum of 25 to 30 hours of chess instruction. An example of these improved educational skills can be found in the research of Flesner & Gliga (2014) which showed that novice children who played chess remarkably improved their school performance in Romanian language and mathematics. Moreover, schoolchildren who play chess regularly most likely improve their cognitive and socio affective competences as well (Aciego, García, Betancort, 2012). Thus, it might be concluded that playing chess at a young age can enhance educational and social skills, when chess is practiced regularly. Hence, we can form our last proposition:

P3: The transfer of knowledge regarding the benefits of chess to parents might stimulate parents to let their children join a chess club.

Chapter 3: Data collection/research method

This chapter will describe the ways in which the data for this project was collected. To investigate the problem and answer the central question of the project, both primary and secondary data was collected. First, the collections methods for primary data will be discussed. Next, the secondary data will be discussed in the same manner. For this project, primary data was collected on four topics: 1) The opinions of HMC members about the club, 2) the views of parents concerning chess for children and a chess club, 3) other chess clubs' policies and marketing strategies, 4) the effectiveness of an open day. Each topic and corresponding collection method will be discussed intensively in the following paragraphs.

Questionnaire amongst HMC's current members

Firstly, a questionnaire was made for the current members of chess club HMC Den Bosch for which permission was granted by HMC Den Bosch. The goal of this questionnaire was to investigate why members joined the club and what the current members find attractive about the club itself. The exact questions can be found in Appendix A. The members could fill out this questionnaire voluntarily. Moreover, the questionnaire was made via a Google Form and the link was sent by e-mail to all members. However, due to the low response rate via e-mail, the members also had the chance to fill out the questionnaire on paper during one of the club nights. In total, 50 members of HMC Den Bosch filled out the questionnaire. Since the club has 105 members, the response rate was just below 50%. The ages of the respondents lie between six and 83 years old, with an average age of 33.74 years old. Among the respondents, 24 are underage and only one woman. Most of the respondents live in the city of 's-Hertogenbosch (38 respondents) or in municipalities near 's Hertogenbosch (6 respondents). The remaining respondents live more than fifteen minutes by car away from the chess club location (according to www.googlemaps.nl). The average respondent started playing chess at the age of 14, plays chess for 23 years now and is a member of HMC Den Bosch for 12 years.

Questionnaire amongst parents

Secondly, a questionnaire was set up for parents with children in elementary school. Our aim was to gain insights in the view of parents concerning chess for children and a chess club. Two example questions are 'Would your child be interested in learning how to play chess?' and 'What do you consider as an appropriate contribution fee (per year) for a chess club?' The whole questionnaire can be found in Appendix B. For the distribution of the questionnaire, a family member of one of our team members was contacted. The family member teaches at elementary school 'De Vossenbergh' in Schijndel, a town close to Den Bosch (fifteen kilometers). Her class consists of 23 children in the age of six till eight. After receiving permission from the headmaster, she was willing to send the questionnaire to the parents of her class. Only 6 parents filled out the questionnaire, which can be translated to a response rate of 26%. Although, the low response rate

was disappointing and undesirable, there was not sufficient time to distribute the questionnaire to more parents. The teacher of the class thought the low response rate could be explained due to fact that many parents are migrants who struggle with the Dutch language or parents who are low-skilled. Therefore, the results are expected to be biased, as high-skilled parents might have a more positive view about chess. Nevertheless, their views could still be helpful for our conclusions and recommendations.

The decision to use questionnaires to gather information from parents and the current HMC was consciously. The main reason behind this decision was the fact that questionnaires usually generate more responses than, for example, interviews (Harris & Brown, 2010). This is due to the fact that a questionnaire can be send by email (Akbayrak, 2000). However, the results can be influenced by faulty questionnaire design or low response rates (Harris & Brown, 2010; Akbayrak, 2000).

Interviews with chess clubs in Breda, Eindhoven and Tilburg

Thirdly, interviews were conducted with three chess clubs located in the province Noord-Brabant. The purpose of each interview was to gain insights in the chess club's policies and strategies, especially regarding young members. Based on recommendations by chess club HMC, chess clubs De Drie Torens in Tilburg, De Baronie in Breda and Eindhovense Schaakvereniging (ESV) in Eindhoven were contacted. HMC recommended to interview board members of these clubs, because they have a similar size and play in similar leagues as HMC does. In addition, De Drie Torens, De Baronie and ESV all have a substantial youth department. The chairman and secretary of each chess club were approached via an email. From all three chess clubs, a board member was willing to do the interview. For De Drie Torens, De Baronie and Eindhovense Schaakvereniging this was respectively secretary, chairman and chairman. Next, we made appointments with each board member to do the interview. All interviews took place at the home of the board member and was done by one of our team members. For the interviews, ten almost identical questions were prepared, which can be found in Appendix C. Each interview lasted for approximately half an hour.

The reason behind the choice to do face-to-face interviews, instead of over the telephone interviews, was to lower any boundaries. In addition, it was in our belief that data collection via an interview was most useful in this case, as it allowed the participant to ask for clarification and explain more (Harris & Brown, 2010). Moreover, it provided us with the chance to pose additional questions based on the participants explanations. On the other hand, interviews tend to be more bias than questionnaires, because the person interviewed might be influenced by the words or intonation of the interviewer (Akbayrak, 2000). Since the interviews for this project were not all conducted by the same person, it is possible that the results are be slightly different.

Open day

To investigate the effectiveness of promotional activities, an open day was organized by the chess club. The event took place on Friday June 1, between 4:00 and 6:15 p.m, in socio-cultural centrum De Biechten. The aim of the open day was to promote chess club HMC and attract new members. The event was promoted in several ways. Firstly, 23 elementary schools and five high schools in Den Bosch were contacted to ask permission for promoting the open day that the school. In total, seven posters and 450 flyers (Appendix D), with information about the club and open day, were distributed at four elementary schools, four high schools, and at the socio-cultural centrum De Biechten. Moreover, the event was shared on Facebook and promoted by paid advertisements, targeted on people living in Den Bosch. The promotional activities were mostly done as a part of this project, whereas the open day itself was arranged by the chess club.

Secondary data

In addition to primary data, secondary data was collected on two topics, namely the number of membership of four chess clubs and the demographics of Den Bosch.

In preparation for the interviews, data on the number of memberships of HMC Den Bosch and the interviewed chess clubs was collected. The data was obtained from nbsb.nl, the website of Noord-Brabantse Schaakbond (North-Brabant's Federation for Chess). The website contains annual reports of the federation, which were used to create an overview of the number of memberships over the last ten years of chess clubs HMC, De Drie Torens, De Baronie and ESV (Appendix E). With the use of these data, we were able to prepare us better for the interviews and ask more relevant questions.

Furthermore, via cbs.nl, the website of *Centraal bureau voor Statistiek*, various data were obtained about the demographics of Den Bosch. Data on the website of *Centraal bureau voor Statistiek* is accessible for everyone, without any charge. This collection method was chosen, as it a convenient way to obtain much demographic data about Den Bosch, without conducting research ourselves. The data from Statistics Netherlands was exploited to create a SWOT matrix and to select primary and secondary schools to contact for the planned open day. Moreover, the demographic data was used to provide HMC Den Bosch with better and more specific recommendations.

To sum up, both primary and secondary data was collected for this project. Primary data was collected via two questionnaires and three interviews with chess clubs. In addition, secondary data for background information was obtained from nbsb.nl and cbs.nl.

Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter, the findings from the interviews and questionnaires will be presented in order to draw conclusions as well as verify our propositions. Next to this, a small part of the findings from the *Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek* is included.

Statistical Data from CBS

An important measure firstly taken, was to look for secondary data from *Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek*, which collects and publishes all kinds of statistical data from both social as well as economic nature. The numbers from the CBS are being widely used. From these data, it can be concluded that HMC Den Bosch is located in a relatively low-income area of 's-Hertogenbosch. (CBS, 2014). This can also be noticed on the map in Appendix F. In addition to this, the overall number of children playing sports is decreasing in 's-Hertogenbosch, which can be linked to the problem of HMC Den Bosch's decreasing memberships as well. (CBS, 2014).

Questionnaire amongst HMC Den Bosch's members

Firstly, the fifty answers of the survey amongst HMC Den Bosch's members are being investigated. In the first part of the survey, personal questions were asked regarding age, gender and membership duration. This part already showed one important characteristic of the members, namely that most of the members have been active at the club for a longer period.

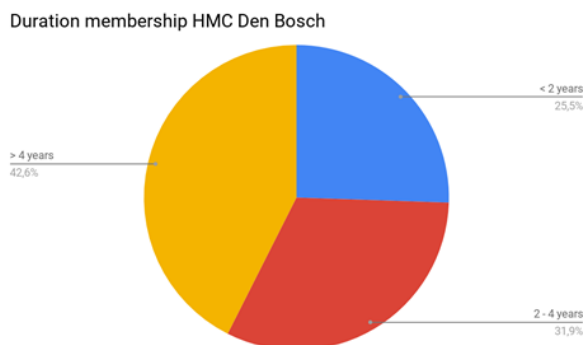


Figure 1: Duration of memberships at HMC Den Bosch

In the second part of the survey, open questions were proposed to the members to receive opinions concerning the game chess, the accommodations at HMC Den Bosch, its location, and their overall opinion about the club. Generally, most of the member's opinions regarding the game chess were not noteworthy; however, some members indicated that they liked the social contacts within the small world of chess. Our findings showed that most members experience a friendly a warm atmosphere at HMC Den Bosch,

including social contacts. Furthermore, a large part of the members enjoys the fact they can play chess at their own level during the club nights.

The questionnaires also showed that generally the location of the club is considered to be 'sufficient' by the members. A majority of the members answered that there is nothing to complain about the location, so overall the members are satisfied about 'De Biechten' as a location for HMC Den Bosch. However, we do not want to ignore certain answers given that were not so satisfying. A few members, for example, said that there is a lack of hospitality at 'De Biechten' (e.g. at the bar). This information could be important for the club to take into consideration. Moreover, according to our findings, the parking space at the location is perfect, since parking is free and there is enough space available. Another advantage of the location is that it is easily accessible both by car and public transport.

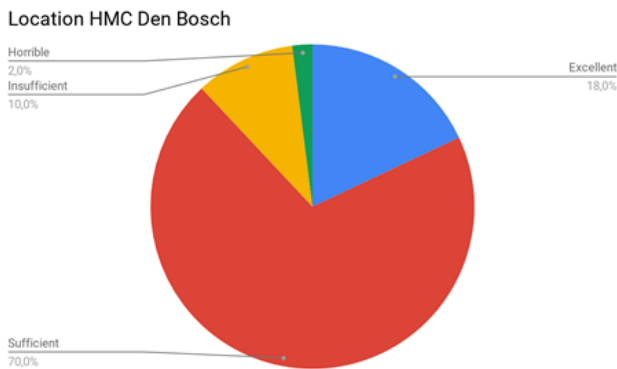


Figure 2: Members' opinions on socio-cultural centrum De Biechten

At the end of our survey, members were asked if they had any suggestions to improve HMC Den Bosch. Enough answers were received to present some clear findings. The most striking answer showed that the members think the club should focus more on its youth as well as spending more attention on attracting and maintaining new members.

Survey amongst parents

At the elementary school 'De Vossenbergh', located in Schijndel, 23 parents were contacted, from which unfortunately only six replies were received. Even though this sample is too small to draw conclusions, the most meaningful results will be mentioned. All parents had kids who could play chess, but all of them are not active at a chess club. They believe the most optimal contribution range is between 50 and 70 euro, and the optimal training time is in the afternoon. This is in contrast with HMC's policy, since their contribution

fee for children is 90 euro, and the children have chess lessons in the evening. Moreover, five out of six parents indicated that after being informed about the advantages of playing chess for a child's development, they were more likely to encourage their children to play at a chess club. Hence, by informing the public about the advantages of chess, clubs might increase their memberships, consequently receiving more young members.

Interviews with chess clubs in Breda, Eindhoven and Tilburg

For a clearer overview of potential improvements at HMC Den Bosch, three different larger chess clubs in the surrounding of Den Bosch were interviewed. To fulfill this, De Baronie, De Drie Torens and the Eindhovense Schaakvereniging were interviewed, providing insights about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for HMC (Appendix G).

The interviewed chess clubs all set goals on receiving and keeping members in the club. De Baronie, for instance had as a goal to reach 100 members, of which 20% youth members and they have reached this, so their next goal will be reaching 125 members. De Baronie stated that their memberships can grow instead of decrease, because of the good atmosphere at the club. ESV implemented a goal, which is to increase the number of members in the age category 20-40. According to ESV, their solution for this was that they advertise at companies like ASML, VDL, Philips, and the High-Tech Campus. These companies and places are all located in Eindhoven, which is convenient and smart. ESV, nevertheless, has no clear goal concerning youth members, since they already have many youth members. De Drie Torens stated that their goal is to keep the number of members constant or let it grow a little bit. It was being investigated that all of the three chess clubs' youth members mainly consist of children in elementary schools, so there are not many members which are in secondary school. The three chess clubs also acknowledge the problem of youth members leaving the club when they go to high school, because of time pressures and they often have to make a choice between different activities and then decide to quit chess.

The chess clubs also provided insights in the ways they attempt to attract new members and keep current members in their club. De Baronie said that the club gains new members, especially by providing chess lessons to adults. In addition to this, relatively few people leave the club due to the good atmosphere, because their club is located in a nursing home for the elderly. This is both cost-saving for the club and provides the nursing home with a livelier ambience. ESV mainly acknowledged that a child can help to convince other children to start playing chess, which was also mentioned by the other two chess clubs. De Drie Torens does not do well in attracting new members, despite their efforts to stop the declining number

of memberships. For example, they organize open activities for everyone (also non-members), join Try-Out Sports (a kind of ‘Sjors Sportief’), and keep an active Facebook page.

Open day

In total, sixteen people visited the open day. Out of these sixteen people, seven were children aged 6-16 years old, eight of them were accompanys of the children, and one of them was an adult. Striking was that all seven children were boys. Furthermore, the results show that the larger part of the visitors was attracted to the open day via Facebook (nine), whereas only three people via flyers. Although sixteen visitors cannot be considered many, five of them will indicated that they will apply for a new membership in the next season, and one visitor stated to probably become a new member.

SWOT analysis

Based on the results mentioned above combined with information retrieved from CBS, a SWOT analysis can be made. The SWOT matrix for HMC Den Bosch can be found in figure 3 and will be discussed briefly.

Strengths	Opportunities
Reputation in national competition Convenient location of club Joyful atmosphere and challenging competition during club nights	Den Bosch has a relatively high-educated youth Chess has many benefits for children that might encourage parents to sign up their children
Weaknesses	Threats
High contribution amount There is nobody responsible for HR or marketing and as a result there are no promotion activities There is little guidance or attention for new members The club organizes little social activities	The number of people doing sports, especially youth, has been declining over the recent years Regular chess playing can be replaced by digital chess, together with other forms of chess HMC is located in a lower-income area

Figure 3 SWOT matrix

Firstly, the strengths and weaknesses of HMC are mainly based on result from the questionnaires. The strengths represent the reasons why members join the club and stay a member. As the SWOT matrix

demonstrates, one of the strengths identified, is HMC's good ranking in the national competition according to HMC's board. This could be a reason for chess players to join HMC instead of another chess club, as playing at HMC enables them to play on a high level and be challenged.

On the other hand, the weaknesses represent the reasons why people do not join the club or cancel their membership. One of HMC's main weaknesses is the high contribution fee. As figure 4 shows, HMC's contribution is relatively high in respect to the other chess clubs. In addition, parents who responded to the questionnaire opined that the optimal contribution for children is between 50 and 70 euro. Since HMC's contribution is above 70 euro, it can be seen as a weakness.

	HMC Den Bosch	ESV	De Baronie	De Drie Torens
Children (< 16 years old)	€90.00	€50.00	No data available	€57.50
Young adults (< 21 years old)	€90.00	€57.50	No data available	€62.50
Adult	€110.00	€95.00	No data available	€82.50
Senior (> 70 years old)	€80.00	95.00	No data available	€82.50

Figure 4 HMC Den Bosch's contribution fee and interviewed chess clubs (Sources: www.hmcdenbosch.nl, www.eindhovenseschaakvereniging.nl, www.dedrietoens.nl)

Next to strengths and weaknesses, two opportunities for HMC were identified. To begin with, a larger part of the children and teenagers living in the neighborhood of the club have parents with a lower-income (Central Bureau for Statistics, 2014). It is possible that families with a lower-income are not aware of the value of playing chess, as chess is mostly practiced by higher-income and high-educated persons. Besides, children from low-income families might be discouraged from joining the club due to the high contribution fee. This means that the socio-economic area of the club could be a threat for new memberships. Nevertheless, proclaiming the benefits of chess in promotional material could be an opportunity for HMC, as parents indicated that after receiving such information, they are more likely to encourage their children in playing chess. Finally, the SWOT matrix also shows some threats to the continuation of the chess club. For instance, the declining number of sport memberships for the age category 12-19 (Tiessen-Raaphorst, 2015) and the rise of playing chess digitally will reduce the number of people interested in joining a chess club.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, recommendations and limitations

Conclusions regarding the findings

After discussing the most important results of our research, we can conclude our findings and answer the research question - How can chess club HMC attract new members, especially aged 6 to 18 years? - in different ways.

First of all, in order to increase the number of youth members, there should be an increased awareness in the city and at schools about the chess club. Based on interviews of other chess clubs, this could be done either with activities such as open days or via several marketing initiatives such as giving classes or workshops at schools or flyering at schools. Particularly, advertisement at tech companies has been successful to the chess clubs as it is more likely that “knowledge workers” would like their children to play chess. Although theoretically it has not been proved, the reason behind this could be that it is a common sense that chess skills are related to the problem solving, mathematical and other skills and that these workers are most likely aware of. Promoting HMC and professional approach to chess amongst such companies could be an important promotional step to increase the number of youth players. On the one hand, it is assumed that active posting on the website and Facebook would help to attract publicity as online active promotions have been stressed in the interview with other chess clubs. On the other hand, promotions could be informing parents about benefits of chess, so they could initiate to bring their kids to the chess club, which is based on the survey response of parents of an elementary school. Thus, “proposition 3” is supported, whereas “proposition 2” is partially supported.

Secondly, even though this project focuses on youth members, attracting new adults to HMC should be also considered. According to other chess clubs, having lessons to adults is an important benefit of their club. Besides, the results from the questionnaires to parents showed that most of the parents favor a lower contribution fee than the current contribution fee at HMC. This could be a reason for parents not to sign up their children. Hence, the club needs to focus on decreasing the contribution fee for children. Hence, if the club can attract more adult members, they will receive a larger fee of contributions to compensate for the youth. Therefore, considering that HMC gives lessons only to youth not to adults and by providing chess lessons to everyone at the club could be another step forward for HMC to attract new members.

Overall, there are a several ways to draw the attention of society to chess and the chess club while maintaining and delighting the current members. In order to expand HMC and bring the chess club to the next level, it is vital to have active board members or other active members who are in charge of promotional activities and meanwhile creating and maintaining a pleasant atmosphere at the club for the current members of HMC.

Conclusions regarding open day

For promoting the open day, flyers and posters were spread at the elementary schools, high schools, and the socio-cultural centrum. When comparing this to the results, specifically the number of visitors, this can be considered ineffective since only sixteen people visited the open day. In addition, only three visitors were attracted to the open day via flyers and posters. Hence, the flyering and postering were not efficient. Nevertheless, as five out of the sixteen visitors responded to the question “Do you consider joining the club?” reacted as “yes” (Appendix H). In addition, one visitor indicated to probably become a new member next season. Thus, to take into account that there is generally a smaller interest in chess, the results of the promotional activities with respect to the Open day are satisfactory. Hence, “proposition 1” is supported.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, we provide chess club HMC with the following recommendations. Additionally, ideas for the implementation will be briefly discussed.

- Focus on promotional activities to increase HMC’s awareness in Den Bosch

In order to create awareness among the citizens of Den Bosch, it is advisable to promote the chess club at companies with employees with a higher level of education or companies with ‘knowledge workers’. The effectiveness of this was supported by the chess club ESV. Furthermore, HMC could enhance the awareness of its existence by becoming more active at schools, for example by providing chess lessons at schools or during sports days (e.g. Sjors Sportief). Moreover, paid Facebook advertising proved to be effective in the promotion of the open day. Therefore, it is recommended to maintain an active Facebook page and use paid advertisements to attract people for upcoming events. Finally, advertising the benefits of chess could stimulate the interest in chess.

- Recruit an extra board member who will be responsible for promotional and social activities
- Provide better guidance for new members
- Decrease contribution fee for children

To make a decrease in the contribution fee for children possible, chess club HMC could search for a less expensive location, for example, a nursing home, like chess club De Baronie.

- Provide chess lessons to adults once a month

This recommendation would be a perfect way to attract new adult as a member of the chess club. In addition, it can increase their interest in chess, leading to more loyal adult members. Although it was not within the focus of the project, it is an important insight, as it will generate new memberships, and therefore awareness and money.

- Active board and member engagement

Both ESV and De Baronie stressed during their interview that an active board is important in attracting new members and maintaining the current memberships. However, other members should be responsible for several tasks at the club as well, to increase engagement.

- Open Day

One of our recommendations is to organize an open day, which was already implemented by the chess club. After evaluating the results from the open day, an extra recommendation is to promote the event on a bigger scale, by including schools from towns close to Den Bosch. Particularly, schools that are considered for talented children, such as schools for intellectual-gifted, should be targeted. Furthermore, it might be beneficial to experiment with hosting an open day at the beginning of the season, so children can immediately start. A drawback would be that children might already have joined other sports clubs.

- 'Friend-lessons' for youth members

A 'friend-lesson' would entail that each youth member brings one or two friends to the chess lesson and would be held one or two times per year. The setup of a normal lesson might have to be adjusted slightly during a 'friend-lesson', so everyone can play, and the level is not too high. It is expected that this recommendation will be effective since all interviewed chess clubs stressed the importance of positive word-of-mouth for children. A 'Friend-lesson' is likely to enhance the effect of word-of-mouth.

Limitations

The main limitation was the collection of primary data. More specifically, the primary data from parents to evaluate parents' opinions about chess was limited. This was largely because schools were reluctant to contribute to this project by distributing the questionnaire to parents of the children of the schools. As a result, the questionnaire for parents obtained only six responds, which questions the reliability and validity of our conclusions.

Another limitation concerns the primary data collected through interviews: the sample size was relatively small, and the interviews were conducted by more than one person, which might make the results more bias.

One more limitation has been faced during the Open Day which was organized on June 1. Although parents confirmed that their child will be joining the club at the beginning of the season, in September, it is still uncertain whether they are going to take membership or not. This limits us to gauge the results and see whether the project has achieved its goal. The time between Open Day and the beginning of the season might result in “change of mind” of parents’ or children due to different reasons.

Lastly, due to the project’s lifetime two problems arose. The brief period was an obstacle to collect more primary data from schools. It would be useful and more reliable to collect data in a broader geography to analyze the environment about chess in the Netherlands. Moreover, the short project life was a limitation to distribute more flyers, posters and to deliver more of other advertisement activities to increase awareness of the club as well as the Open Day.

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Appendices

Appendix A

(Translated from Dutch to English)

Questionnaire HMC members

Dear Members, we are students of Tilburg University and we are currently working on a project at HMC. As a part of this project, we need information about your experiences with chess and the club HMC. You would really help us out by filling in a couple of questions about chess and the club HMC. It is not obligated to mention a name in this enquiry. Also, this questionnaire can be filled in on voluntary base.

Introduction questions

1. What is your age?
Open question
2. What is your gender?
Male/female
3. What is your place of residence?
Open question

Questions about chess and the chess club HMC

1. For how many years have you been playing chess? (Number)
Open question
2. For how many years have you been a member of HMC? (Number)
Open question
3. What do you like about chess? (Please give a detailed answer)
Open question
4. What do you like about HMC?
Open question
5. a. What do you think about the residence 'De Biechten' of the club? (Think about facilities, room, etc.)
Open question
b. What do you think about the location of 'De Biechten'?
Open question
6. Do you have suggestions to improve the club? (Think about organisation, competition, social activities etc.)
Open question

Questionnaire for parents of children in primary school

Dear parents, we are students of Tilburg University and we are currently doing a research on chess for the chess club Den Bosch. As part of this project we need to investigate the 'chess' environment and collect different opinions on the sport chess. You would really help is by filling in a few questions regarding chess. It probably takes 5 minutes. It is not obligated to mention your name in this enquiry.

Introduction questions

1. What is your age? (Number)
Open question
2. What is your gender?
Male / female
3. Do you have children? If so, how many?
Yes / no, followed by an explanation
4. How old is/are your child(ren)?
Open question

Questions about chess

1. Can you play chess?
Yes / no
2. Can your child(ren) play chess?
Yes / no, followed by a number
3. If yes, is/are your child(ren) active at a chess club?
Yes / no, followed by a number
4. If not, do you think your child(ren) would be interested in learning how to play chess?
Yes / no
5. What is your image of chess?
Open question
6. Which benefits do you know of children playing chess?
Open question

7. Research has shown that playing chess appears to be good for the development of a child, as it can improve logical and strategic thinking, and mathematical insights. Would you, now knowing about this, encourage your child more to (learn to) play chess? (Please give a detailed answer)

Yes / no, followed by an explanation

8. If your child(ren) would become a member of a chess club, do you think the training would better take place in the afternoon or in the evening?

Afternoon / evening

9. What amount would you probably like to spend on the contribution of the chess club per year?

Range of 10 euros (50-60-70-80-90-100)

10. Do you know that there is a chess club in Den Bosch named HMC?

Yes / no

Interview questions for chess clubs

1. How long have you been a member of the chess club and what is your function in the board?
(Introduction question)

2. Does the club have specific targets concerning the number of memberships?
 - a. If so, how does your club try to reach these targets?

3. Where do the current members originate from?
 - a. Do they live in city in which the club is located or in the surroundings?
 - b. If they live in city, do they live in the neighbourhood of the chess club or all across city?
 - c. Is this the same for the young members?

4. Are the young members mainly students of elementary schools or high schools?

5. How long do youth members approximately stay at the club?
 - a. Do they remain a member for a long period, and move from Junior to Aspirant to Junior?
 - b. (Or) Do they quit during their puberty or their college period?

6. Through the annual reports of the NBSB (North Brabant Chess Federation) we have been able to gather many information about the number of members and youth members. According to that information, the chess club currently has X members, including Y youth members, and the number of memberships has grown/stayed stable/declined over the last 10 years. Is this information accurate, according to you?

7. What do you think the reasons are why the number of memberships has grown/stayed stable/declined over the last years?
 - a. Is it due to promotion?
 - b. Is it due to their image

8. Is the club active in promotional activities?
 - a. If so, what kind of promotions?
 - b. Does the club have special strategies to raise more members? Or to maintain current members?
 - c. Is there also promotion specific for youth members?
 1. For example, on elementary schools? or high schools?
 2. Is the club mainly focussing on children of elementary schools or high schools?
9. Are residents of the city Eindhoven aware of the presence of the chess club ESV?
10. This was the last question I wanted to ask. Do you have any questions, remarks or tips that could be interesting for us?

Flyer to promote the open day




Schaakvereniging HMC Den Bosch

Je bent nooit te jong of te oud om te schaken!

**Open middag – 1 juni van
16.00 tot 18.15 uur**

Kom langs tijdens onze open middag voor meer informatie over onze club en het leren van schaken, zowel voor jeugd als voor volwassenen!

Houd jij van denksporten of van puzzels oplossen?

Dan is schaken echt iets voor jou!

Wil jij ontdekken hoe leuk schaken is? Dan zit je goed bij HMC Den Bosch: de actieve club voor schakers van elk niveau!




Schaakvereniging HMC Den Bosch

Groot, sterk en gezellig

De clubavond

- ✓ Elke vrijdag is er vanaf 18.30 tot 20.00 uur training voor de jeugd. Daarna start de clubavond voor volwassenen. De leden spelen dan een interne competitie: *iedereen op zijn eigen niveau*, dus het wordt altijd spannend!

De jeugd

- ✓ Bij HMC Den Bosch leren kinderen écht schaken. Elke stap van de jeugddopleiding wordt afgesloten met een examen en diploma!

Iedereen is van harte welkom, dus kom gerust een keer langs!

Kijk voor meer informatie over trainingsdagen, clubavonden en open dag(en) op:
www.hmcdenbosch.nl
 of onze facebookpagina! 

Sociaal-Cultureel Centrum De Biechten
Vincent van Goghlaan 1

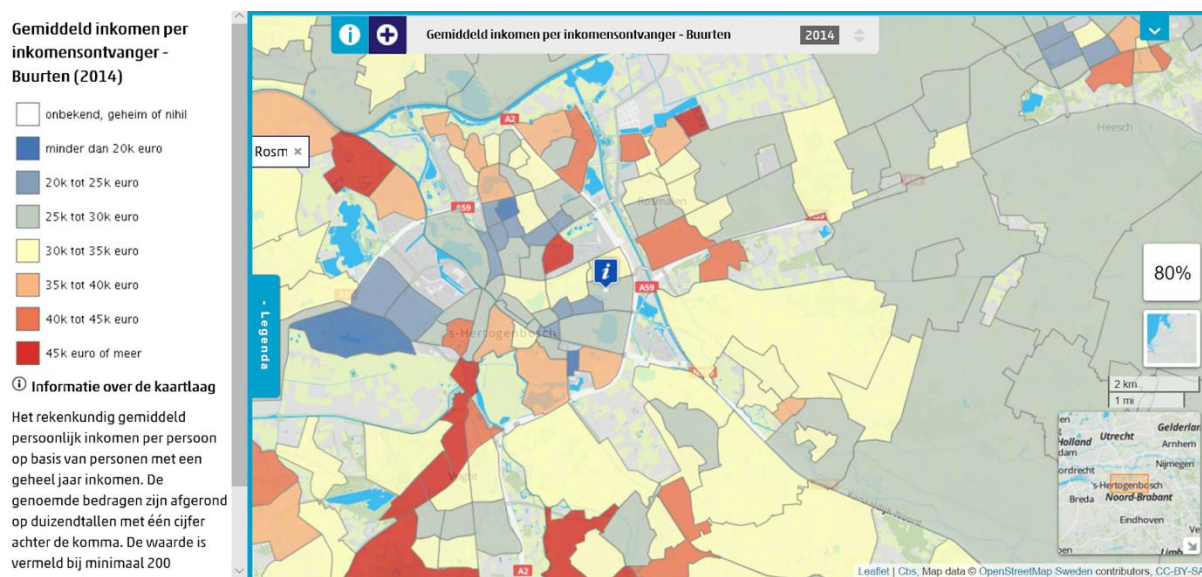
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Nederland

073-6146009
petermooren@home.nl

Overview of number of memberships

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
HMC Den Bosch											
Female	8	6	6	8	8	6	3	-	-	-	
Double membership	5	7	10	9	6	4	0		5	3	4
Senior	62	67	56	67	72	68	71		77	84	75
Youth	38	27	32	40	38	41	43		50	49	52
Total	105	101	98	116	116	113	114		132	136	131
											Decline of 20%
ESV (Eindhoven)											
Female	16	12	10	5	3	2	2		-	-	
Double membership	6	7	11	8	13	10	5		3	2	1
Senior	56	60	51	57	50	46	49		47	44	46
Youth	45	37	33	24	15	15	11		11	9	11
Total	107	104	95	89	78	71	65		61	55	58
											Increase of 85%
S.V. De Baronie (Breda)											
Female	4	3	4	3	2	1	3		-	-	
Double membership	3	1	1	2	1	2	1		2	1	1
Senior	72	68	66	67	66	69	66		66	67	68
Youth	16	17	20	13	13	9	17		11	17	18
Total	91	86	87	82	80	80	84		79	85	87
											Increase of 5%
De Drie Torens (Tilburg)											
Female	5	8	12	8	3	4	4		-	-	
Double membership	3	3	2	5	5	5	5		6	3	
Senior	42	40	42	47	44	42	51		52	62	
Youth	22	31	45	39	13	15	20		23	28	
Total	67	74	89	91	62	62	76		81	93	
											Decline of 28%
Remarks:											
No data about 2010 is available.											
No data is available about De Drie Torens before 2008.											
Source: http://www.nbsb.nl/informatie/downloads/											

Data from Statistics Netherlands



This map above shows the average income per income recipient, living in the neighborhood of the location where HMC Den Bosch is located (appointed by the *i*).

Answers to interview questions for chess clubs

	de Baronie (Breda)	de Drie Torens (Tilburg)	ESV (Eindhoven)
1)	Member since 2007 Chairman	Member for nine years Secretary (for four years)	Member for over 25 years Chairman (since 2018) Also, trainer for youth members.
2)	Goal: 125 members (of which 20% youth members) Strategy: create a homier / cozy atmosphere. The club recently moved to the restaurant of a home for elderly.	Goal: keeping the number of members constant or grow a little bit.	Goal regarding adults: To increase the number of members aged 20 to 40. Strategy: They advertise at companies like ASML, VDL, Philips and at the High-Tech Campus to attract new members. Goal regarding youth: none. (There are so many youth members that they even had to set up a waiting list for new members.)
3)	Residence of members: - City Breda (+-75%), - Towns near to Breda (+-25%). - Youth members: city Breda.	Residence of members: - Municipality Tilburg (100%) - Youth members: city Tilburg	Residence of members: - City Eindhoven (60%) - Towns around Eindhoven (40%)
4)	Youth members: mainly children in primary school, and some secondary school students	Youth members: mainly children in primary school, and some secondary school students	Youth members: mainly children in primary school
5)	Most youth members leave if they are fifteen or sixteen years old, some leave just before going to university.	Most youth members leave during secondary school. The ones staying during secondary school, often leave when they start to study at a university.	Most youth members leave during secondary school.

6)	Data is incorrect. The club has 100 members, of which more than 20 youth members.	Data about members is correct.	The data is incorrect. The club has 112 members, of which 22 girls, 35 boys and 55 adults (all male).
7)	Reasons for increasing number of members: - Providing chess lessons to adults. - Relatively few people leave, due to the good atmosphere	Reasons for declining number of members: - Death (for adults) - Joining another club, with more challenging opponents (for adults). - More interest in other sports or hobbies (for youth members).	Reasons for increasing number of members: - Children of the 'knowledge workers' join the club - Schools for intellectual gifted children teach their students chess - Members of the club and parents teach children chess at school.
8)	General promotional activities: - Festivities around the club's - 125-year anniversary. - PR-board member - No flyers, posters or Facebook page For youth members: Breda Actief (similar to <i>Sjors Sportief</i> ; seems not effective) However, word-of-mouth seems most effective.	General promotional activities: - <i>Koningsdag</i> activity in park - Open activities for everyone (also for non-members) - Playing chess at the big chess board in the library and handing out flyers (not effective) - Active Facebook page (but not paid advertising) For Youth members: - Try Out (similar to <i>Sjors Sportief</i>) - Occasionally providing chess lessons at schools However, word-of-mouth is most effective.	General promotional activities: none promotion or social media Word-of-Mouth is very important for them, especially for youth members.
9)	Not whole Breda knows about the chess club, but people who are interested have no problem finding them.	Probably not, but people who are interested have no problem finding them.	No, they believe that many adults have the potential to play chess, but that they are just not aware of the club.

10)	<p>Good lessons for youth members is important, because that is the main reason for positive word-of-mouth.</p> <p>A smooth organization of the club is essential because it influences the atmosphere within the club. For de Baronie, this includes an active board, a small task within the club, a coach system for less skilled chess players.</p>	<p>Main problem at de Drie Torens is that the level of chess becomes increasingly higher. Adult members who have a low level, are more likely to quit. Partly, it is because they do not want to lose every time. This also makes raises the barrier to join a chess club, as a beginning chess player.</p>	<p>An active board is important who wants to attract and maintain members.</p> <p>ESV focuses on high-level chess and involving children at many schools.</p> <p>ESV has a low contribution (around €50)</p>
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Reflection of the open day (June 1, 2018. From 16:00 until 18.15)Visitors log

	Description of the main visitor	Place of residence	Source of information	# total visitors	Consideration of taking membership
1	male, 14 years old He came to play against Grand Master	Roosendaal	Facebook	1	No
2	male, 6 or 7 years old He can play chess in a basic level	Schijndel	A friend from elementary school	3	Yes
3	male, 15 or 16 years old He is from the USA	Den Bosch	Website of the club	1	Yes
4	female, adult She is interested in chess lesson for adults	Den Bosch	Biechten (flyers)	1	No
5	male, 6 or 7 years old His father will also join the club	unknown	Facebook ad.	3	Yes
6	male, 12 or 13 years old	unknown	Flyer from school	2	Yes
7	male, 8 or 9 years old	unknown	Facebook	3	Probably
8	male, 10 years old	Rosmalen	Facebook	2	Yes

During the event, the visitors could choose between taking a chess lesson one-to-one or play against Chess Grandmaster. While the kids were taking activities, the parents were informed about the club, its lessons, competition, etc. by a head of youth of HMC.

There was a movie for children on a big projector for visitors whose purpose was to join to the main visitor. Some snacks and drinks made their time more pleasant.

Overall, although number of visitors were less than expected (16 in total), most of them liked the chess club and they were satisfied with the service. One of the child even considered to join with his father to Friday evenings. According to the visitors respond, at least 5 new members will join the chess club from new season, which starts in this September.