

## Communication - The first in a series of three

How often do we hear it?

"It's all about communication!"

"Communication is the key!"

I guess that is a BGO - a blinding glimpse of the obvious. Communication, whether it be within a family, a business, an institution - in any situation where there is more than one person - it is critically important to have interaction, verbally or otherwise.

In community soccer organizations "getting the word out" is a major challenge. In most cases practice and game fields are scattered across the community. So unless there is a central location such as a field house or "club" office there is nowhere to congregate on a regular basis. And one of the biggest obstacles to communication is that the game at the grassroots level is pretty well dependent on volunteers. It's not like a school or a business where, in theory, there is a relatively easy and controlled communications system.

And then came the Internet!

While the Internet is not the perfect answer by a long way, it has revolutionized the communication systems within soccer organizations.

Emails and the club website provides a terrific opportunity to let everyone know what's going on.

Notice I say "opportunity" - and not "the solution."

Communication is only as good as those who are charged with the responsibility of communicating. GIGO is the acronym attributed to George Fuechsel, an early IBM programmer. Garbage In, Garbage Out! will immediately take away any advantages of the computer and the "information superhighway" (Al Gore's famous cliché of the 90's).

We all know there is a lot more to dispersing information than having the hardware and Internet access. It's no good having a great website and first class mailing/messaging system if you have no idea who is reading the communications.

We know only too well that with our own website, the newsletter you are reading now, and our Byte Size Coaching program that the information goes out, but we are never quite sure who actually reads it.

In the next two newsletters we will take a look at some of the systems and programs available such as the many club and league online management systems that if implemented properly greatly aid the smooth running of an organization.

Just as important, we will show case a couple of grassroots soccer organizations who work hard to make sure their communications find their target while at the same time trying to ensure that communication is a two-way street. And the latter is probably the biggest nut to crack.