



HenleyCentreHeadlightVision

Project 'Experience of Sport' Understanding the Lapsed target Research Debrief

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February 25th 2008

Presentation Outline

- Introduction
 - Background, objectives, methodology and sample
- Lapsing from Sport
 - Before the lapse
 - The lapsing process and its triggers
- Returning to sport
 - Predisposition to a return
 - Potential triggers to return
- Conclusions and Way Forward
 - Thoughts on retaining and averting lapse





Introduction

- BACKGROUND
- OBJECTIVES
- METHODOLOGY & SAMPLE

BACKGROUND

Understanding the 'experience of sport' of lapsed participants

In January 2008, **Henley Centre HeadlightVision** conducted qualitative research with informal and organised sport participants to understand what defined a good and bad sporting experience

Given that the target were regularly participating in sport, they tended to have or gravitate to positive experiences – none having experiences negative enough to prompt opting out of sport altogether

To gain further insight into the role of experience in participation, HCHLV conducted an additional 2 x group discussions among 'Lapsed' consumers to understand what might reverse lapsing and the explore extent to which lapsing is driven by (poor) experiences



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Understanding lapsing and potential for a return to participation

OVERALL:

To understand the 'Lapsed' participant

SPECIFICALLY:



Understanding lapsing from organised sport: perceptions & experience



Triggers and barriers to lapsing and returning to participation in sport



Potential for an 'offer' to help a return - and 'thought starters' for this

In the process providing pointers for any Sport England activity to help prompt a *return* to participation for this target

METHODOLOGY & SAMPLE

2 x group discussions with 'lapsed' participants

Regularly playing organised sport in the past 3 years for at least 3 months...but now lapsed.

	Segment	Gender	Location
1	Lapsed/averse	Male 21-35	London 20.02.08
2	Lapsed/averse	Female 21-35	London 20.02.08

NB: A VERY SMALL SAMPLE COVERING A POTENTIALLY LARGE AUDIENCE. This sample reflects urban lifestyles / working patterns and is centred in the Pre-family / Young Family life stage characteristic of these age bands.

METHODOLOGY & SAMPLE

2 x group discussions with 'lapsed' participants

All recruited according to the following criteria:

- **21-35yrs, BC1C2** SEG (max of 2 recent graduates per group i.e. graduated in last two years)
- **Used to regularly participate in an organised sport** (at least twice a month). Sports include football, tennis, swimming, badminton, rugby, cricket, golf, netball, squash, hockey
- **Have stopped playing the sport in the last two years.** The sport itself must have been played for at least three months
- **May currently go to the gym, run or take part in other personal fitness based activities** but must no longer take part in organised sport
- **Able in principle to continue playing their sport** but have chosen not to (i.e. reason for stopping is not due to injury/ illness)
- **50:50 split of those who stopped because of the experience of sport** (i.e. quality of facilities, lack of opportunity, too much effort, team dispersal etc) **vs because of a change in personal circumstance** (i.e. new job, longer hours, moved to a new area, greater family commitments, change of income)
- **At least 3 per group were members of clubs/ teams** for their organised sport i.e. playing competitive sport in leagues, tournaments, members of sports clubs



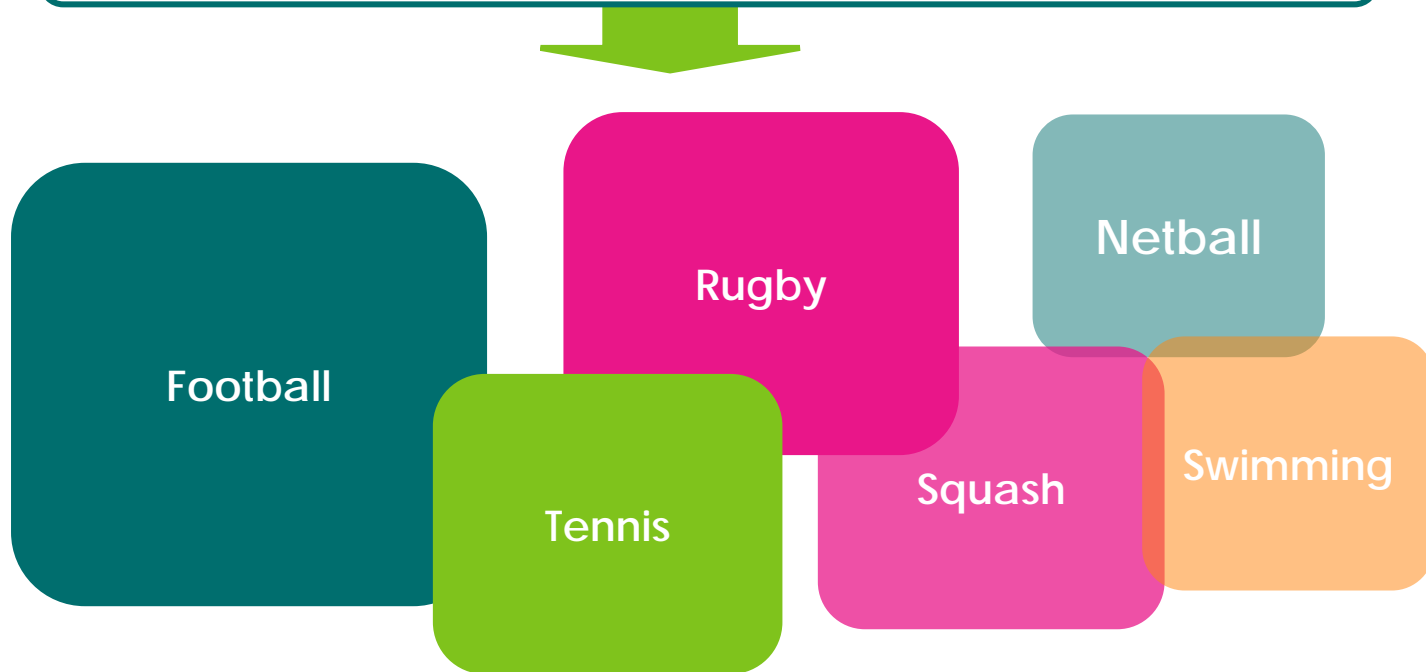
The Lapse from Participation Sport

- SPORT BEFORE THE LAPSE
- THE LAPSING PROCESS
- LAPSING TRIGGERS

SPORT BEFORE THE LAPSE

A range of sports played before lapsing happened

Typically mainstream and largely team or club - oriented vs solo

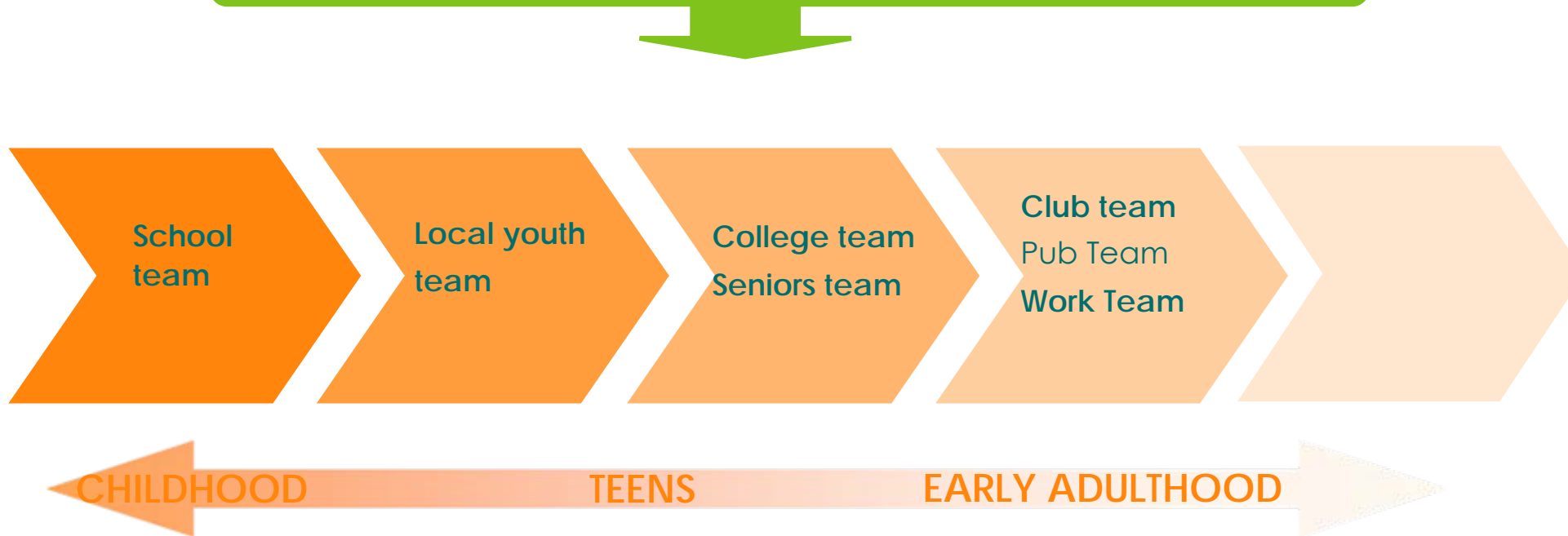


Typically requiring a level of organisation and coordination - more characteristic of the 'organised' vs informal target

SPORT BEFORE THE LAPSE

And typically, an involvement stretching back to childhood

Playing a central, but gradually diminishing role in leisure



In many ways sport was a habit – it felt intuitive and a prominent feature on the landscape going into adulthood

SPORT BEFORE THE LAPSE

While all were 'organised', commitment to sport varied

For some, sport was integral to lives; for others, A.N.Other activity

Less committed and competitive – sport as a social activity and a habit:
'play to play'.

More typically female

More committed – sport as central lives and a discipline: *'play to win'*.

More typically male territory

COMMITMENT



The tightness of the bond with sport varies: for some it's something lost... for others it's something you got out of the habit of – a closed chapter.

SPORT BEFORE THE LAPSE

For all, sport's (lost) benefits echo benefits voiced by *existing* participants

In the 'good times' a plethora of benefits, in key with the emotional drivers that seem to underpin any good sporting experience

**DIVERSION /
RELEASE**
The buzz of
exertion,
adrenaline and
'letting off steam'

**SOCIAL LIFE /
BELONGING**
the feeling of being
part of a unit
...togetherness and
banter

PERFORMANCE
that feeling of
having played
well....and scored
a winner

EXERTION / FITNESS
Feeling healthy
and sleeping well;
fighting 'the
wobble'

Benefits are often formative and often still fresh in mind.



SPORT BEFORE THE LAPSE

Indeed, there's a tendency to look back on sport with a nostalgic eye

"I have never laughed so much as at the things that happen when you play in a team" Male, London

SOCIAL /
BELONGING

"You feel you are part of a unit"
Male, London

PERFORMANCE

"You get bored of the gym but with sport you got something different – trophies and things to drive you on"
Male, London

"I did swimming for fitness but also for the...well, the 'me time'"
Male, London

DIVERSION /
RELEASE

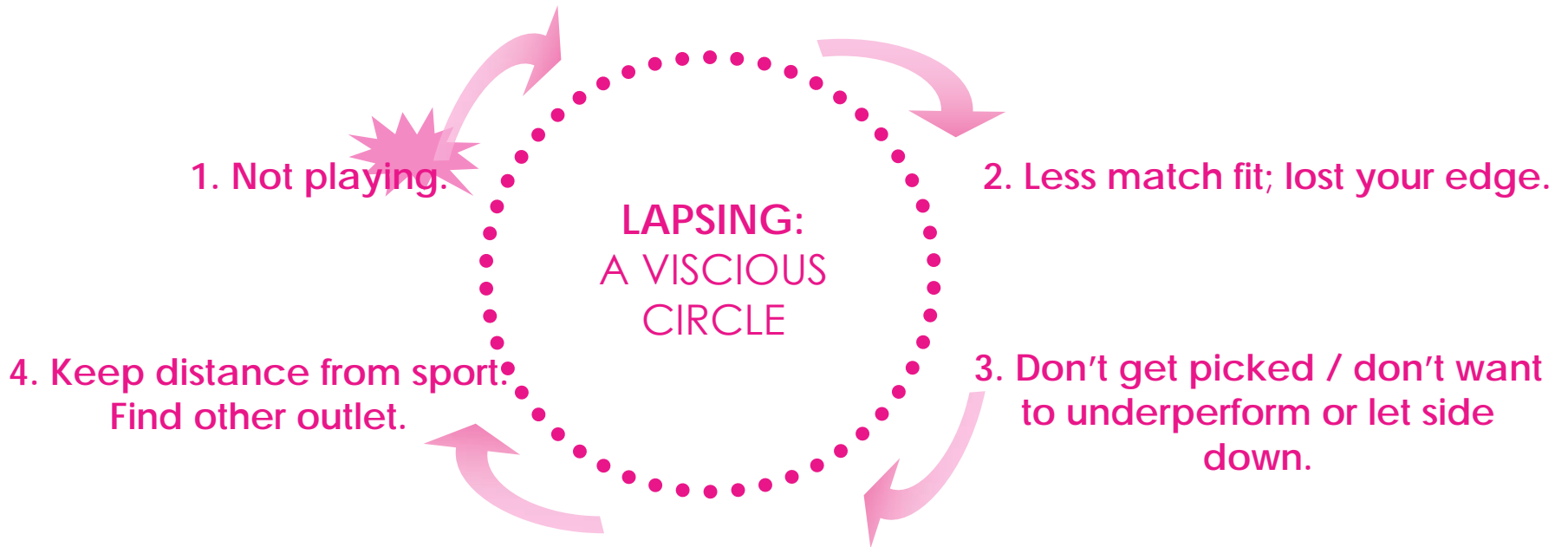
Organised Sport once meant escapism, social life, release.
Much of that EMOTIONAL CAPITAL and GOODWILL remains.



THE LAPSING PROCESS

Whatever its initial triggers, lapsing acquires a momentum of its own

In many ways a self-fulfilling vicious circle - *especially* for women.



From a small trigger, a return to organised sport at **FORMER LEVELS** can quickly seem a distant prospect and a real uphill battle, without increments and solid **COMMITMENT**.

THE LAPSING PROCESS

Lapsing also invites post-rationalisation – an explanation for stopping sport

Giving up something widely seen as a 'good thing' tends to require participants to explain that choice to themselves and others

*"I used to play football and squash in the power league **but the girlfriend stopped me**", Male*

*"I stopped playing **because we bought a house**" Female*

"SO YOU JUST GAVE IT UP THEN?"

"The pool just got too busy really so I stopped going" Male

*"I used to have coaching on a Friday but **the coach changed it to Thursday** which – I'm sorry – is the girls' night" Female*

In some cases, the 'explanation' may be precisely that and something to address. For many though, it can feel like a 'proxy' or excuse.

LAPSING– OVERALL
Cues to lapsing superficially fall into two areas

'Circumstances' dominate

I moved house

My work hours increased

I had a baby

**CHANGES IN PERSONAL
CICUMSTANCES**

I got a promotion

I got engaged/ married

My team dispersed

The pool got too busy

It got too expensive

**CHANGES IN THE SPORT
EXPERIENCE**

The facility closed

I could never get a court

Nobody could organise it



LAPSING – OVERALL

In practice lapsing is guided by circumstance rather than experience

Overwhelmingly, the ultimate cues for lapsing relate to wider MACRO shifts in participants' lives, rather than 'bad experiences' per se

Only in a few cases does EXPERIENCE genuinely force a lapse – rather than being a proxy...

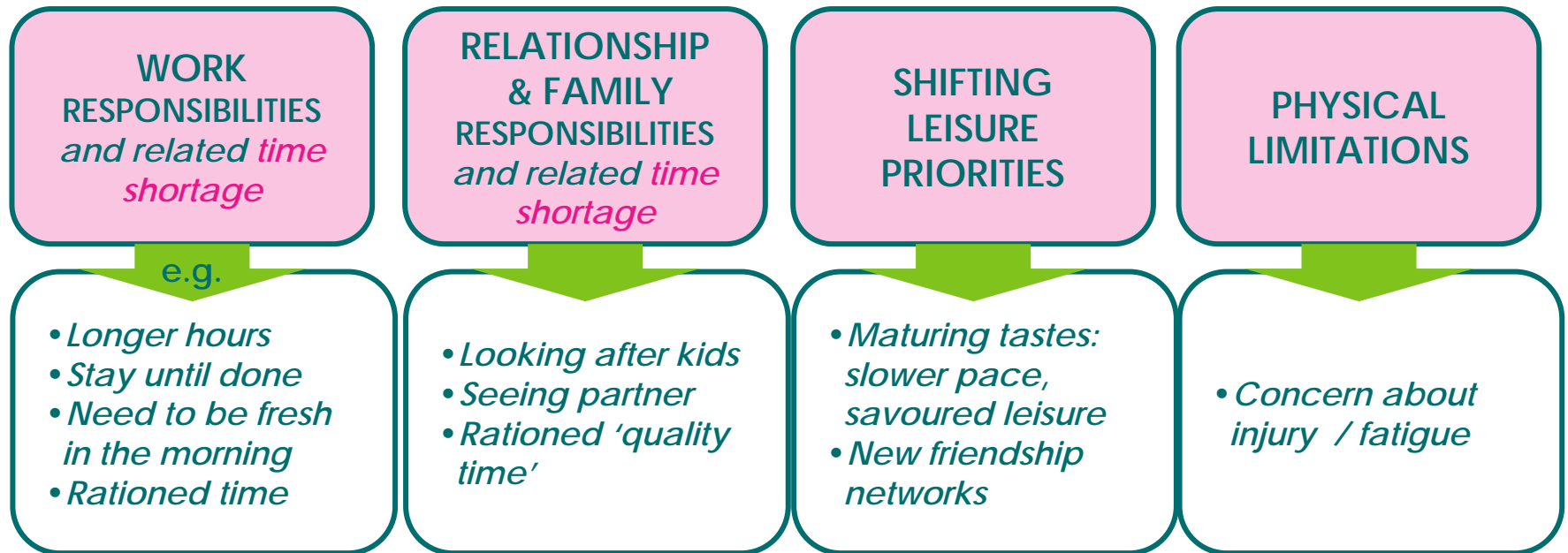


Hence any attempt to win back this target needs to consider how to help sport fit around and adapt to life stage shifts - rather than merely 'spot-treating' bad *experience* per se

LAPSING TRIGGERS – CIRCUMSTANCE

Circumstance brought about by LIFE CHANGE is hence the prime trigger

As 20's turn into 30's, time and energy become more tightly rationed. Organised Sport – time and energy demanding – is an easy sacrifice.



Fundamentally, reversing the lapse would need to somehow accommodate the time/energy deficit – a hard task.

LAPSING TRIGGERS – CIRCUMSTANCE

The dearth of time and energy sits at the heart of most lapsing

"I get tired from work and though I feel awake after sport it's finding the initial energy that's hard"
Male, London

"My work hours increased which clashed with training and I also got engaged...something in my life had to go and it was sport"
Male, London



"As you get into your late twenties you enjoy the finer things in life – and afternoon with wine and a nice meal - not a game of football" Male, London

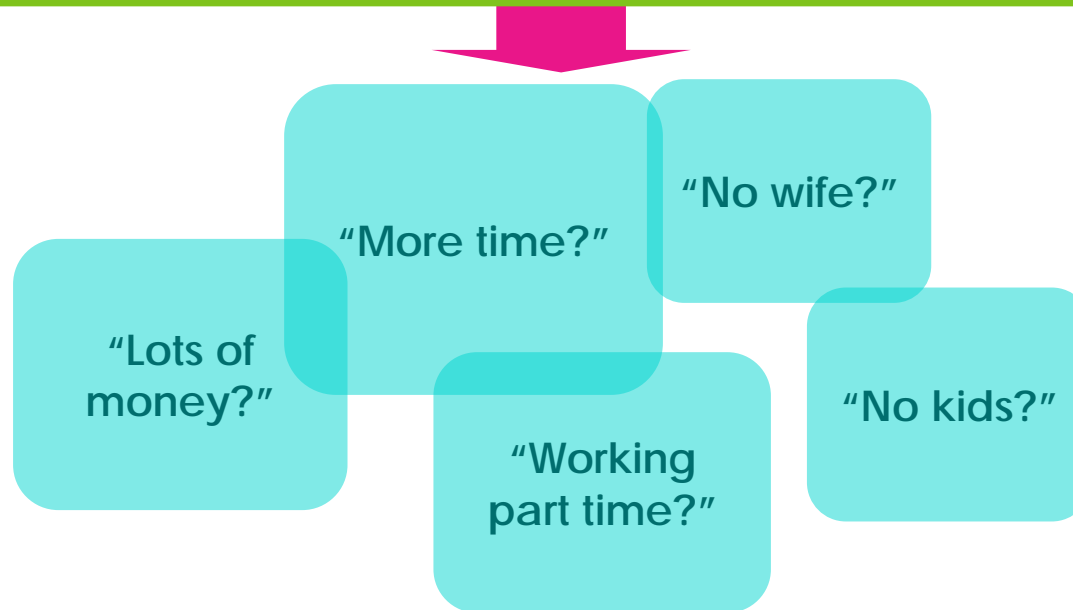
"I used to have coaching on a Friday but the coach changed it to Thursday which – I'm sorry – is the girls' night"
Female, London

Hence while *outwardly* 'opening hours' and 'access' might address fall-out – the issue is really about consumers' own priorities

LAPSING TRIGGERS – CIRCUMSTANCE

Just how *much* lapsing *is* about circumstance is also illustrated by a muted 'Blue Sky'

What in an ideal world would help you get back into sport?



Hyperbole... but revealing all the same!

LAPSING TRIGGERS – THE EXPERIENCE

Experience on the other hand feels more 'proxy' than direct trigger

Two negatives of experience can however accelerate lapsing

ORGANISATION PROBLEMS

- Dispersal or break up of teams
- Departure of team 'leader'

i.e. WHO *could I play with*
...if I really wanted to

PROBLEMS WITH ACCESS

- Lack of awareness or no local provision
- Lack of workable time slots
- ANTI-RINGING RULES – *can't join a new team*

i.e. WHERE *could I play*
...if I really wanted to?

So while 'life change' is the *ultimate* barrier, better ACCESS and ORGANISATION might help RETAIN organised participants for longer



LAPSING TRIGGERS – THE EXPERIENCE

Indeed there feels like an obvious case for the offer to evolve here

MAKING ORGANISATION EASIER

*“**Organisation** is a pain, Just to get everyone to turn up and to make sure you have all the stuff is a complete hassle”*

“I got lumped with organising my football team. As well as being a nightmare to do, it’s cost me loads of money calling everyone up, trying to get people to play” Male, London

INCREASING ACCESS

*“I played at lunchtimes near to work but then they **closed the facility** so we stopped” Female, London*

*“**We couldn’t get a court** for two weeks... the my cousin was away for a few weeks. So we gave up trying” Male, London*

Real potential to address these two gaps – though ‘time and energy’ will remain issues

PREDISPOSITION TO RETURN

Despite 'good times' though, there's limited *appetite* for a quick return

There's a sense that 'things have moved on' – the self-fulfilling cycle taking effect. Post-rationalisation is also in full swing.

Playing some sport... so haven't given up entirely

Still going to the gym...so it's not as if I'm unfit

I'll go back one day / when the kids are older....

Will you really?

Little real regret.

Life changes and habits have embedded quickly. Organised sport needs to try to ACCOMMODATE LIFE CHANGE...or *pick up later*.

POTENTIAL CUES TO RETURN

There is though a role for NPD to plug the gaps in experience which lose participants

Gaps are most obvious in organisation and 'access'

SUPPORT WITH
ORGANISATION

e.g.

- Work-based schemes
- Off-the-peg competitions
- Sport organising services?

"With fundraisers you go to a website and it says 'this is what you have to do to start one up'"
Female, London

COMMUNICATING AND
DEVELOPING ACCESS

e.g.

- Providing access closer to work/home – and communicating it
- Transparent grading of club standards e.g. via 'star' system
- 'New-member friendly' system
- Easing anti-ringing restrictions

While uncertain to win *back many* players, an aid to *retention*.

POTENTIAL CUES TO RETURN

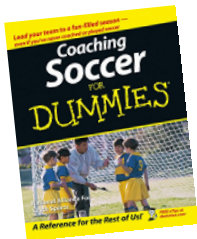
Organisation and access – thought starters

SUPPORT WITH ORGANISATION

Work based schemes



Off-the-peg or 'DIY' organisation



Idiots' guides



'goals' subscription tournaments

COMMUNICATING AND DEVELOPING ACCESS

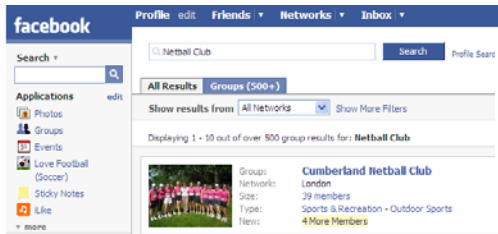
Clarity re access



Laterooms.com

Google maps

Reversing informal networks into organised ones?



Signposting to new members

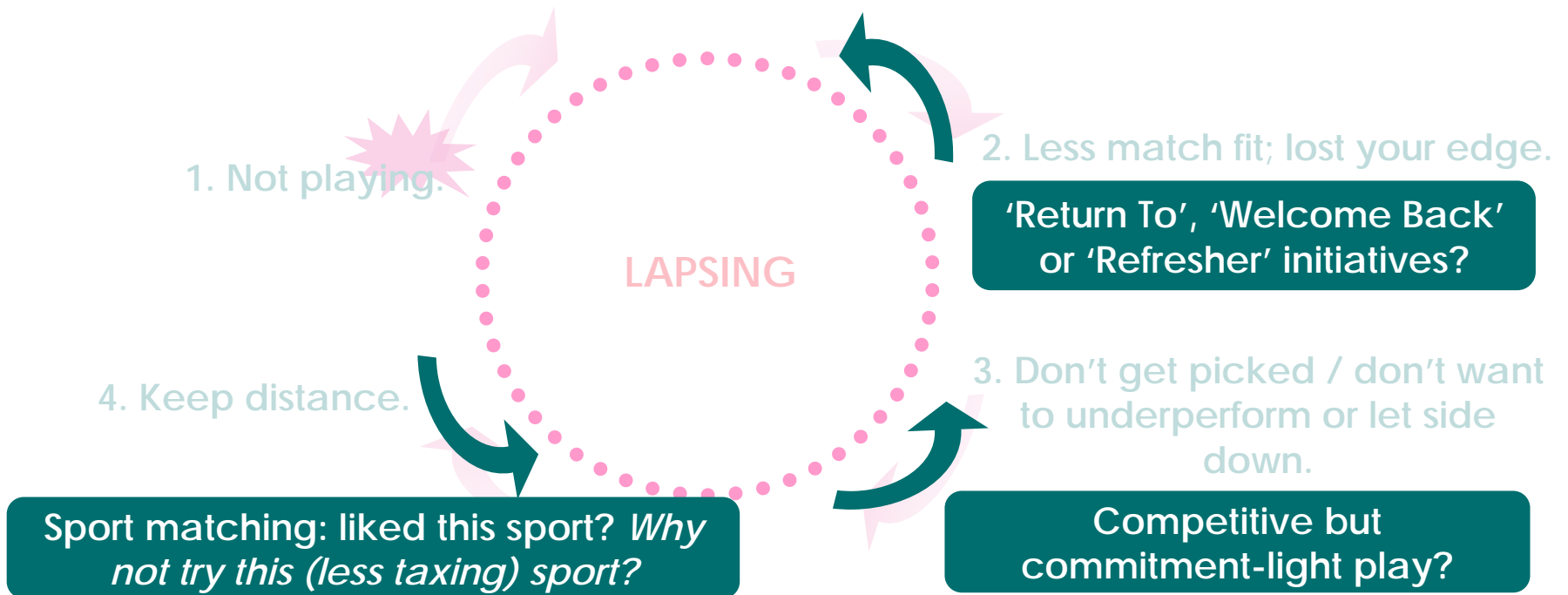
Outreach schemes



POTENTIAL CUES TO RETURN

There's also a potential role for ideating against the lapse 'spiral'

Inviting return by offering 'refresher' or alternative sports



A return to sport or 'like-sport' - at a lifestage-friendly pace

POTENTIAL CUES TO RETURN

Lastly, there's potential to dial up the emotional capital of organised sport

Still fresh in mind...and rich in nostalgia and goodwill

THE SOCIAL /
BELONGING –
*BE PART OF
SOMETHING*



PERFORMANCE
– *FIND YOUR
COMPETITIVE
STREAK*



DIVERSION /
RELEASE –
*HARD DAY AT
WORK?*



EXERTION /
FITNESS –
*REAL, NOT
SANITISED*



...VS



Again, while hard pushed to challenge 'life stage lapse', there's a role for asserting the values of organised sport to RETAIN and REMIND.



Conclusions and Way Forward

- THOUGHTS GOING FORWARD

CONCLUSIONS

This target suggests that *life change* rather than experience prompts lapsing

Overwhelmingly, the ultimate cues for lapsing come from MACRO shifts in participants' lives: life-stage-driven lack of TIME and ENERGY and the sense of having *different* priorities.

EXPERIENCE alone rarely cues lapsing – rather than being a proxy. Poor ACCESS and ORGANISATION do however *accelerate* lapsing.

Lapsing is also self-perpetuating. Return to organised sport, particularly at past levels quickly feels unattainable without increments or a gear change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

'Macro' aside, worth exploring how to plug gaps in organisation and access

SUPPORT PARTICIPANTS WITH ORGANISATION

e.g.

- Work-based schemes
- Off-the-peg competitions
- Sport organising services?

Work based schemes



wear it pink
26 October 2007

Off-the-peg or 'DIY' organisation



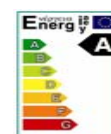
COMMUNICATING AND DEVELOPING ACCESS

e.g.

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- 'New-member friendly' system
- Easing anti-ringing restrictions



Clarity re access



Transparent level grading'



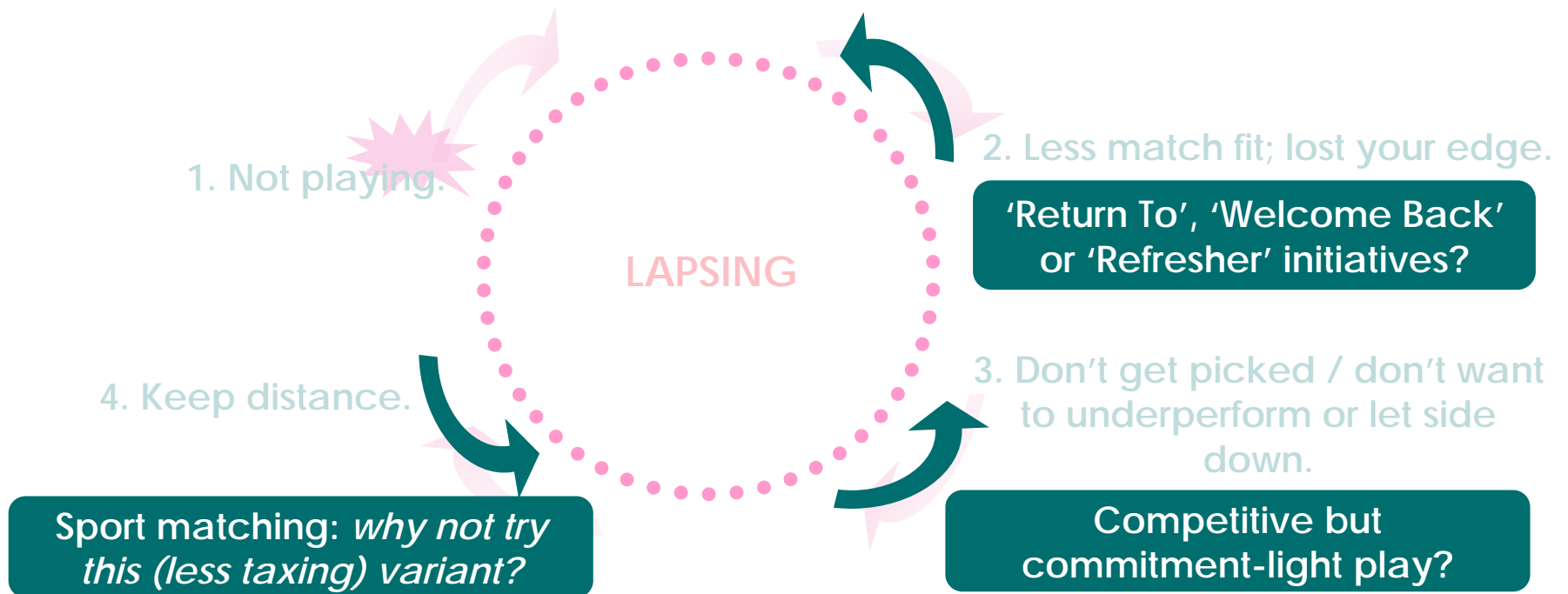
Signposting to new members



RECOMMENDATIONS

There's also a potential role for ideating against the lapse 'spiral'

Inviting return by offering 'refresher' or matched sports



POTENTIAL CUES TO RETURN

Lastly, communication can help retain and remind

In an age where consumers are craving authentic experiences and finding release in 'analogue' living, organised sport has a compelling story to tell.

Hence it's worth dialling up emotional capital and making the very strong case for staying or returning.

THE SOCIAL /
BELONGING –
*BE PART OF
SOMETHING*

PERFORMANCE
– *FIND YOUR
COMPETITIVE
STREAK*

DIVERSION /
RELEASE –
*HARD DAY AT
WORK?*

EXERTION /
FITNESS -
*REAL, NOT
SANITISED*



...VS





Creating better futures



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