An Evaluation of the benefits of a Marketing Strategy in promoting the New Sports Facility at Athlone Institute of Technology

This thesis is presented submitted in part fulfilment of the Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Tourism & Leisure Management in the Dept of Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Studies, Athlone, Institute of Technology

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation and the research involved in it are entirely the work of the author.

Signature: _____________________    Date: _____________________

Daniel Seery                     25\textsuperscript{th} March 2011
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AIT ......................... Athlone Institute of Technology.

ARSC ......................... Athlone Regional Sports Centre.

FAI ......................... Football Association of Ireland.

FIFA ........................ Federation Intérnationale de Football Association.

GAA  ......................... Gaelic Athletic Association.

IAAF ......................... International Association of Athletics Federations.
The overall aim of this research project was to evaluate the benefits of a marketing strategy in promoting the new sports facility at Athlone Institute of Technology. The researcher sought to achieve this aim by investigating the present marketing strategies used by the Sports Department and by exploring the benefits of incorporating new and additional marketing tools.

A multi method research approach was employed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. A qualitative method of research was employed in the form of interviews. Three key members of staff involved in the new sports facility were interviewed. In the case of the latter, an internet questionnaire was sent to 60 students in the Tourism and Leisure Department of Athlone Institute of Technology.

Results show that in the present economic climate when competition is intense, innovative and creative marketing plays a major role in the successful promotion of such a facility, providing the services offered are competitively priced and sensitive to the financial circumstances and needs of the target market.
Chapter 1.

Introduction

The motivation for undertaking this research is due to the researcher’s personal interest in the area of Sport facilities where the author would hope to obtain future employment on completion of his studies.

The primary aim of this research is “To evaluate the benefits of a marketing strategy in promoting the new sports facility at Athlone Institute of Technology”

In order to achieve this aim the author considers the following research objectives:

1) To ascertain the effectiveness of the present marketing strategies used by AIT Sports Department.
2) To explore the benefits of incorporating new and additional marketing strategies
3) To analyse the factors that impact on the uptake of the sports facilities by the target market.

For the purpose of this research the target market will comprise:

- Students, staff and the local population – individual membership
- Clubs, organizations and associations – training facilities and staging of events

The literature review in Chapter two forms the centre ground for the consideration of the main research objectives. The literature critically reviews relevant and current literature in relation to the research area and discusses the contributing factors, which prevents the target market from availing of the services provided by the new AIT sports facility.

Chapter three outlines the methodology framework used and developed to answer the research question and to achieve the research objectives.

Chapter four discusses the results collected from the qualitative data carried out, these are indicated in terms of themes and quoted where necessary.

Chapter five summarises the research findings and draws conclusion to make recommendations and provide answers to the research question.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In the years of the “Celtic Tiger”, Ireland witnessed growth in many service sectors, particularly in the area of sport and leisure. Now, with the downturn in the economy, individual consumers are looking at membership of sport facilities as an expensive luxury, while clubs and associations are demanding better sport and ancillary services while at the same time looking for lower prices. In order to compete in these recessionary times, and with an every changing marketing landscape, there is an urgent need for organizations to adopt innovative and creative marketing strategies in order to promote their facilities and gain market share. Kotler defines marketing as “Typically seen as a task of creating, promoting and delivering goods and services to consumers and business” (Kotler 2002 p5).

2.2 Integrated Marketing Communications

The role of marketing communications is to inform, persuade, remind, reassure the customers and differentiate the organisation in the minds of the customers. The concept of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) allows all marketing communications to be linked together providing the consumer with both a consistent and unified message. It ensures that all the promotional tools work in harmony. An organization needs to create Marketing Mix – 7P’s (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process and Physical evidence) if providing a service.

Services can be defined as “Economic activities between two parties, implying an exchange of value between seller and buyer in the marketplace (Lovelock and Wirtz 2007 p15). Services such as those being provided by new sport facilities at Athlone Institute of Technology contain intangible attributes so positive memorable experiences are very important for the Institute in order to promote this facility and gain market share.
The target market for the new sports facilities has two distinct groups:

a) Individuals taking out membership

b) Clubs, Organisations and Associations, availing of training facilities and/or using the facilities to stage events.

The Institute must deliver a transparent and reliable message to all target markets in order to gain a powerful brand image within the minds of these target groups.

Communication tools can be personal or non-personal. “Personal communication channels involve two or more persons communicating directly with each other face-to-face, person-to-audience, over the telephone or through e-mail. Non personal channels include media
(newspapers, magazines, direct mail, radio, television, telephone, cable, satellite, wireless, audiotape, web page, billboards, signs posters) atmospheres, and events” (Kotler 2002,p576)

2.2.1Advertising

“Advertising is a non-personal mass communication using mass media such as TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards etc. The content of which is determined and paid for by a clearly identified sender (the company)”, (DePelsmacker 2004,p5). Advertising is a very useful tool for companies and organizations to reach their target market and to showcase their facilities to a wider audience.

Radio, particularly local radio is widely used by the Institute as an advertising tool. It is often criticised for its lack of creativity because it is a non visual medium. RTE Radio’s new campaign has silenced this criticism with its brand line “Fuel Your Imagination” which is extremely innovative and visually has gone a long way to dispel this view. Anyone who ever listened to Michael O Muireartaigh doing a radio commentary on a GAA match could be left in no doubt as to the power of radio as a marketing tool as he transported them not only to the game but also into the world and lives of the participants. No other medium has the potential to tap into the imagination of the audience.

Outdoor billboards and poster campaigns can often hold the interest of consumers, and get them communicating. It sometimes creates humorous and interesting content and in some cases causes controversy. The Benetton billboards in their 1992 advertising campaign are a good example of this. These ads showed news photos of real, high-drama situations: a man dying of AIDS, a soldier gripping a human thigh bone, a man assassinated by the Mafia, a car on fire, a ship being stormed by emigrants. The controversy was not caused by the visuals in themselves but the fact that they were being used as advertising by a corporation.

Daily and weekly newspapers tend to have a high degree of reader loyalty, reflecting the fact that each title is targeted to specific segments of the population. This loyalty often leads to the printed message being perceived by the reader as having a high level of credibility. Newspapers particularly local papers can be used for creating general awareness of a brand or service as well as well as providing detailed information. Adverts can include a promotional offer e.g. a coupon for a free trial of the service.
2.2.2 Sales Promotions

“Sales promotions are sales-stimulating campaigns, exemplified by price cuts, couponing, loyalty programmes, competitions, free samples, etc.” (DePelsmacker 2004, p5). Many companies and organisations use short term incentives to break through buyer inertia with their main aim being to get the consumer to act now rather than later. Sales promotions can help a company boost its profit or increase the uptake in its services, but should only be used to produce short term positive results. AIT sport department has always believed in keeping their prices at a competitive level, offering special rates to students, staff and the unemployed while being conscious of not devaluing their image.

2.2.3 Sponsorship

Not-for-profit organisations rely on sponsorship from private and public sources. The key to forming these relationships is to have the responsibilities of all involved clearly established and understood and by ensuring that the sponsorship is consistent with the organizations brand image, reputation strategy and mission. “Non-profit organizations can create additional corporate partners, reach wider audiences, increase financial support, or build operations and strategic capacity” (Kolb 2005,p193). E.g: Ballygowan became the Dublin Women's Mini Marathon, official water sponsor in 2009 while Flora, the current title sponsor, intends to continue its association with the race until 2012.

2.2.4 Events, exhibits and trade fairs

Events, exhibits and trade fairs allow one- to one contact with customers and facilitate interaction and personal contact. They allow organisations to showcase their facilities and build brand recognition while gaining an awareness of competitors. E.g.: The Community Games finals 2010, which were televised, put the sports facilities available at AIT on the national stage. The event allowed attendees to view and experience not only the sporting facilities but also the catering and accommodation facilities which form part of the package being offered by AIT. “Exhibits and trade fairs are, particularly in business-to business and industrial markets, of great importance for contacting prospects, users and purchasers” (DePelsmacker 2004,p5)
2.2.5 The Internet

Websites are an essential tool to provide quick and accessible information on products and services being provided by a company or organization. A website for an organisation such as AIT sports department provides a direct link to students, staff, organisations, clubs, sponsors and potential sponsors, the media and the general public. “Web sites are an important link with consumers: some people argue that they can reduce the traditional problem of advertising waste because they are accessed by people who are directly interested in the company” (Heinen, 1996).

As with advertising, organisations must be creative in the design of their web sites as this will help differentiate them from competitors and will help establish their brand image. It is essential that the web site is maintained and updated as users will become frustrated if information is out of date. Web sites can be used to post press releases, to obtain market research information, gather data and provide a platform for consumers to give honest feedback on products and services. It acts both as a marketing tool and as a performance measurement tool which is invaluable as it is vitally important that companies/organizations should not lose sight of the customer’s needs.

2.3 Community Marketing

Community marketing can result in members of a community coming together to identify goals, aspirations and identify shared values. For an organization such as AIT Sports Department it is important that ongoing engagement with the local community is undertaken in an effort to build a powerful brand image and reputation for the Institute. “The process of building relationships with community members who will work side by side with you as an ongoing partner, in any and every way imaginable, building an army of support for your mission, with the end goal of making the community a better place to live” (Gottlieb 2006)

2.4 Branding

An organization cannot posses a high level of brand equity without being consistent in their communication strategy, retaining customer loyalty and acquiring attributes that makes them
unique from their rivals. AIT Sports department needs to establish a brand image for its new facilities that encourages its target market to relate to the organisation and that builds a relationship with all the stakeholders – staff, customers, partners and sponsors. The brand image should encompass the ethos, aims and values of the Institute as this will serve to differentiate from other sport facility providers. The benefits of a strong brand image are extremely powerful for AIT Sports Department. It can help all stakeholders – staff, customers, partners, and sponsors to develop positive attitudes towards the Institute and to identify and relate to its aims. Overall the main aim of developing a strong brand image is to increase customer loyalty which in turn leads to a higher uptake of the new sport facilities.

2.5 Social Networking

Many businesses and organizations are just beginning to understand that advances in technology, such as Web 2.0, has changed the landscape of marketing. Sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Wikipedia have opened up platforms with extraordinary value. The key to this form of marketing is the consumers’ engagement with the brand, and the establishment of a loyal relationship between the two. W. Glynn Mangold (2009, p359), argues the social media sites are traditional, in that they allow companies/organizations to communicate with their customers, and conversely they are non-traditional in that they allow customers to communicate directly with each other in large numbers. These sites give a whole different meaning on word of mouth marketing. Companies and organizations have lost, to a large extent, the power to control the shaping of their message and have to become more aware in relation to this phenomenon. Organisations like AIT Sport Department need to manipulate it to their advantage and ensure that they are earning good conversation on these sites. A company or organization that is successful at this will have a distinct advantage over its competitors by having its customers do the marketing for them.

2.6 Conclusion

The marketing landscape has changed dramatically over the last five years; there is now a greater variety of goods and services available and also a greater exchange of information between
consumers. The marketing strategy adopted by an organization has to work hard if it is to cater to the more complex needs of consumers and adapt to the advancements in the digital world.

AIT Sports Department will have to be innovative and creative in developing its marketing campaign and its brand image. It will have to enhance its targeting strategies, and deliver the right product at the right time and at the right price. This can be achieved by understanding good advertising, being aware and embracing new technologies, and focusing on their brand strategy. Most importantly, AIT Sports Department must offer attractive packages/bundles that meet the needs of their target market as this is of paramount importance to the successful marketing and uptake of the new sport facilities.
Chapter 3  
Research Method  

3.1 Introduction  

This chapter explores some of the methods of research available and outlines the research method chosen by the author in order to achieve the research objectives and answer the research question.

3.2 Research Design  

When deciding on a method to carry out this research, the author considered both a qualitative and a quantitative approach, and the merits and limitations of both before settling on a mixed method approach. Denzin (1989) advised, “By combining multiple observers, theories, methods and data sources [researchers] can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single, single observer, and single theory studies”(p.307),

3.2.1 Qualitative Research  

Qualitative research is “investigation by which a researcher gathers subjective, non numerical data” (Macionis & Plummer, 1998; p.48). It is used to explore and understand people’s beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behavior and interactions. It generates non-numerical/non statistical data and is subjective and less structured than quantitative research in its approach. It aims to specify quality in the relationship between two variables rather than quantify it. It allows the researcher to obtain insights rather than statistics and is useful for analyzing how people actually feel. Interviews and focus groups are the most common means by which qualitative research is carried out. For this research work the author selected a qualitative approach as this method proved very useful to the researcher in the semi-structured interview setting as its use of a non standard approach helped in exploring varied and complex topics.
“Qualitative methods are appropriate when the phenomena under study are complex, are social in nature, and do not lend themselves to quantification” (Liebscher, 1996, p. 669)

3.2.1.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen by the author because they principally contained open-ended questions, they allow the respondents to reply in whatever way they choose, with answers as long as they wish. They allow leeway for other areas to be discussed as they arise while ensuring that all questions the interviewer wishes to ask are covered. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 3 key staff members at AIT and the marketing manager of the Athlone Regional Sports Centre. In advance of the interviews a covering letter (Appendix 1) was sent to each participant detailing the interviewee’s right to anonymity and confidentiality. They were also offered choices in the method used to record the interviews and an outline of the questions the author wished to cover was also included.

The questions were constructed in an open-ended manner allowing respondents to express views and opinions and provide in-depth responses

The questions asked are listed in Appendix 2

3.2.2 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research generates numerical data, or data that can be converted into numbers, for example clinical trials or the National Census, which counts people and households. It deals with hard facts and numbers rather than words, ideas or feelings and is associated with deductive reasoning. Questionnaires are one of the most popular methods of quantitative research. Further to this, the use of a standard format is particularly suited to quantitative analysis Saunders et al. (2007 pg.355) This research method has benefits which include cost effectiveness and speed and it can be given to a large number of people at the same time.

The researcher based the questionnaire around the aims of the study, using different question types such as multiple choice and scale to research the objectives.
3.2.2.1 Questionnaire
The questionnaire (Appendix 4) was developed using data from the literature review and focused on the research question and objective. Due to time and cost constraints, it was decided that an internet questionnaire would be most suited to this research. This method has its limitations as it is only open to those with internet access and those who have email. An introductory email was sent to AIT students (Appendix 3) detailing the nature and purpose of the questionnaire, who the author was, and the need for participation. The email included assurance of confidentiality together with a link to the dedicated website for completion of the questionnaire. In order to obtain a good response level, the questionnaire was designed to allow for ease and speed of completion.

The questionnaire was designed in conjunction with the questions covered in the semi-structured interviews to ensure ease of comparison between responses from both end-users and providers of sport facility services.

3.2.2.2 Participants
The sample group chosen by the researcher is students from the Tourism and Leisure Department in Athlone Institute of Technology. This group was chosen because they had completed 3/4 years study and placements in the hospitality and leisure sectors. In total 60 questionnaires were distributed and 20 were completed and returned. These provided the author with the information needed to meet the aims and objectives of the research.

3.2.3 Documentary Research
The documentary research in this study is included in the literature review. This method provided extensive data and a base from which this thesis could be developed. It also allows for the research of this current study to be compared with the findings from the literature review.

3.3 Limitations
One of the main limitations in this study was time. The researcher had a deadline by which the research had to be completed and this did not allow for any follow up contacts in order to increase the response of the questionnaire.

“without follow ups, response rates will usually be 20-40 percentage points lower than those normally attained” (Dillman 2007. Pg 177).

The researcher recognized that the sample chosen for the survey represent only a small proportion of the target market of the sport facilities. The participants’ area of study may have made them more aware of the facilities that the general target market. The results may therefore have shown a bias but nonetheless they would be expected to indicate trends.

Word restrictions also acted as a barrier as it restricted the amount of information that could be included.

These factors had a limiting impact on the scope of the study.
Chapter 4

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the methods of analysis used, the main findings from the interviews and questionnaires and an overall summary of the results.

4.2 Qualitative Research

The author used semi-structured interviews to qualitatively analyse data for this research project. The main aim of this research was to evaluate the benefits of a Marketing Strategy in promoting AIT’s New Sports Facility. This section will outline the findings from the four interviews conducted for the research. The author has grouped the questions asked in key themes to present the results using the thematic frameworks which emerged from answers given during the interviews. Interviews were transcribed (Appendix 3-6), ensuring clarity of themes raised by interviewees.

4.2.1 Participants in Semi-structured interviews

Interviewee A: Ciarán O’Cathain, President of Athlone Institute of Technology
Interviewee B: Brian Lynch, Marketing Manager, Athlone Institute of Technology
Interviewee C: Gordon Brett, Sports Manager, Athlone Institute of Technology
Interviewee D: Margo Redmond, Marketing Manager, Athlone Regional Sports Centre

In all further discussions and analysis participants will be referred to as Interviewee A, B, C and D respectively.

4.2.2 Objective 1 – Ascertain effectiveness of AIT’s sport department’s present market strategy

Theme 1: 1. Present Market Strategy
          2. Target Market
          3. Effectiveness of present strategy

4.2.2.1 Findings and analysis
Interviewees A, B and C are members of AIT staff, and as such, they provide an insight into the situation which pertains within the Institute. Interviewee D provides details in relation to her own organization, which is a standalone sports facility, and this allows the author to compare the strategies used by the institute with those of a commercial operation. All three interviewees A, B & C agree that the present marketing strategy of AIT’s sports department is incorporated into the marketing strategy of the institute as a whole and is therefore less effective than it could be. It forms part of the student recruitment strategy with the sport facilities themselves look on as an ancillary service. It is not viewed or run as a commercial activity and at best it would hope to be self funding in terms of maintenance of facilities.

.....we don’t have a specific sports marketing strategy.
.....the marketing strategy we have currently is really more focused on the institute rather than the sport facilities.

Interviewee D on the other hand uses a targeted marketing strategy as A.R.S.C. is run as a commercial venture. Programs like “Operation Transformation” which locks in to an already identifiable brand without the need for a large advertising spend are run regularly together with other campaigns and promotions. This type of targeted marketing has been very successful in gaining market share.

Interviewee D would see her target market on the general membership side as being anyone between the ages of 4 and 80 years. On the club side their facilities like the astro-turf pitches and the swimming pool are geared towards squad training and this is where they concentrate their marketing campaigns. Interviewees from AIT see their target market as two distinct entities (1). the resident students/staff of AIT and (2) the clubs and organization that stage events at the Institute. They would however hold differing views on which grouping is their main target.

......currently our target market would be the FAI, the GAA and Athletics Ireland
......our number one target market is the current student base.

There marketing strategy is not really targeted, emails and correspondence are sent to the full college community and no survey had ever been carried out to ascertain how successful these are. With regard to clubs and organizations staging events, this, all AIT interviewees agree, relies heavily on personal contacts and relationships rather than on a marketing programme. Again no formal surveys have been carried out as to the success of the marketing of events and feedback
relies heavily on word of mouth. Interviewee D however carries out regular online surveys and gets feedback on both ARSC marketing strategy and on the services they provide.

### 4.2.2.2 Discussion

There is tentative evidence to show that the present marketing strategy is limited in its effectiveness largely due to the fact that it is not designed exclusively to promote the Sports Department facilities. The findings show that the uptake of the existing facilities for the staging of events has been due to luck rather than any direct action on the part of the Institute. The quality of the facilities like the international standard outdoor running track and the FIFA 2 Star pitches has meant that organizations and clubs have come looking to use them without the need for any promotional or targeted marketing. Where marketing does take place it is largely reliant on personal relationships and contacts between individuals within the Institute and outside sport organizations. Interviewee D on the other hand would use targeted marketing strategies and uses techniques like tapping into well recognized branded campaigns like “Operation Transformation” to increase membership uptake without incurring huge costs. The Interviewees from AIT all confirmed that no survey had been carried out into the effectiveness of their marketing of the present sport facilities while Interviewee D’s organization carries out regular online surveys to gauge the success of their campaigns and to get the views of their members.

### 4.2.3 Objective 2 – To explore the benefits of incorporating new and additional marketing strategies

#### Theme 2:

1. Integrated Market Strategy
2. Marketing tools

#### 4.2.3.1 Findings and analysis

Both AIT Sports Department and the Athlone Regional Sport Centre are investing vast capital in adding to and improving their existing sport and fitness facilities. All four interviewees were in agreement that there is a need for an integrated marketing strategy to promote these new facilities as finance for the maintenance and day to day running costs will be dependent on the success of the marketing campaigns. In the case of AIT Sports Department it is hoped that the new facilities will be the source of a revenue stream which can be used to subsidise student services and other educational activities within the Institute.
Interviewees A, B and C agreed that the scale of the investment and the size of the operation itself would necessitate the appointment of a Commercial Manager who would have responsibility of marketing and running the new AIT Sports facility. While targets would be set the person selected would have autonomy in designing their marketing strategy and choosing marketing tools. This person would have the resources of both the sports manager and marketing manager at his/her disposal together with recourse to all established contacts. It is expected that that initially marketing the commercial side of the facility will take precedent with the commercial manager concentrating on establishing links with all the major sporting organizations both locally, nationally and internationally. All AIT interviewees agree that the target market for the facilities will expand rather than change and see the use of all marketing tools playing a role in the new plan. While they do not wish to pre-empt any marketing decisions of the new commercial manager, they can all see the potential that exist by fusing online and offline communications and agree on the benefits that could accrue to AIT Sports department by using this strategy. Interviewee D already employs an integrated marketing strategy and has a commercial manager in place. She does not see any change in their target market and plans to continue using their present marketing tools.

4.2.3.2 Discussion

Interviewee D works in a commercial environment and has had the benefit of having a marketing strategy for a stand-alone facility in place since its inception. On completion of their new facilities this same marketing strategy will remain in place and they plan to continue using the present marketing tools which are regularly tested and endorsed by way of on-line surveys. As there market is largely local, Regional Newspapers feature highly in their marketing campaigns. They also make full use of emails and text messaging and constantly update their website. They have also added a facebook presence to their list of marketing tools.

Interviewees A, B and C all agree that the new sports facility will operate on two fronts, a stand-alone facility and an educational resource. As a stand-alone facility it will have to operate more like a commercial entity which is the main reason for employing a commercial manager. The Institute already has an internet presence with a web-site, and also has a facebook page
and a twitter account in place. Marketeers are now realising the potential of social network sites particularly their sophisticated targeting tools which can target member profiles based on filters like gender, age interests etc. Questa allows people to provide recommendations on different products and services, for example if a person wished to take membership of AIT Sport facilities or if an athlete was thinking of using the training facilities they could asked their friends if they had used them and get feedback on their experience. This would be a valuable tool in the new marketing strategy particularly as it is hoped that the new facility will attract elite squads who would use the facilities as their training base. On the local front traditional marketing methods like regional newspapers will play a role in attracting members for the gym and running tracks. The new facility will also have the benefit of having access to the database of the entire institute population and tools like email and text messaging can be used in conjunction with this to increase membership.

All interviewees agree on the importance of an integrated marketing strategy. With responsibility resting with a specific person the marketing process will become more proactive and will be more targeted to get results. Creating a brand image for AIT sports facility will be of vital importance and the marketing tools used will change with advances in technology and through effective measurement of results.

4.2.4 Objective 3 – To analyse the factors that impact on the uptake of AIT sports facilities by the target market

Theme 3: 1. Facilities
2. Competition
3. Economy

4.2.4.1 Findings and analysis

All Interviewees agree that the main marketing focus for their respective organisations will centre on the facilities. The Interviewees from AIT would see the quality of these facilities and the fact that all will be of international standard as being a major selling point. The facilities are expected to be a marketing tool in themselves, as well as being the focus of the marketing
strategy. None of those interviewed were aware of any other venue having all such facilities especially as AIT Sports facility will have Physiotherapy, Ice baths and Medical services available on campus, as well as ancillary services like accommodation, catering and of course on-site parking. This makes the facility unique and gives the Institute a distinct advantage when bidding to attract events and marketing the training facilities. It also creates an advantage for the marketing manager and school liaison officer in their campaign to attract student numbers to the Institute. In the current economic climate partnerships arrangements are what all interviewees see as the way forward for increasing market share and keeping marketing and advertising cost as low as possible. All AIT interviewees agree that the revenue generated will be used to subsidise student services and educational resources which will be extremely important in the present economic climate.

4.2.4.2 Discussion

On completion, AIT Sports Department will be the only venue within the United Kingdom and Ireland to have both an indoor and outdoor running tracks of I.A.A.F. standard. In addition full backup facilities like physiotherapy rooms, ice baths and medical services will be available on site on a one stop shop basis. It is hoped that these facilities will be used by national and international athletic associations as a training base for their elite squads. With an abundant supply of student accommodation nearby and catering facilities available on campus, the consensus among the AIT interviewees is that this will prove to be a unique salable package. The new facility will also include FIFA Star 2 football pitches which it is hoped will attract international tournaments. In the present economic climate partnership with other organisations/leisure provides can be used as a selling point for both bodies. In the present economic climate it is not practical for every sports facility to have every amenity particularly if they are in close proximity to each other. Sharing arrangements are beneficial to both and the partnership can work to everyone’s advantage. AIT hosted the community games in 2010 and their bid was successful partly because A.R.S.C. allowed the use of their swimming pool for the event. Both organisations benefitted from the collaboration as their facilities were showcased on national television. Similarly AIT allows the Regional Sports Centre usage of the running track for some of their fitness programmes and it is planned for this type of arrangement to continue on in the future. Local hotels that in other times would be seen as competition in the provision of
fitness facilities are also interested in partnership arrangements. Having seen the plans for the new sports facilities at AIT they have made proposals in regard to them offering package deals to national and international football teams with them providing the food and accommodation and the Institute providing the training and ancillary facilities.

It is planned that the revenue stream generated by the commercial aspect of this venture would be used to subsidies the cost of membership of these facilities for students of the Institute, who in these difficult economic times would not be in a position to pay the true cost.

It would be expected that with a more targeted marketing campaign that there will be a much higher uptake of usage of the facilities by the total Institute population from a present low of approximately 10% to an expected 75% when the facility is completed.

The new sports facilities would also be seen as a marketing tool for the Institute as an Educational Institution. The high profile that the new sports facility will create is expected to have a positive knock on effect on the demand for places at the Institute. The facilities will also allow for the development of new courses in the area of Sport Science. Increases in student numbers will result in greater funding for AIT and with envisaged government funding cutbacks the expected revenue stream for the new sport facility will be of vital importance.

4.3 Quantitative Research

The author used a questionnaire to quantitatively analyse the data for this research project. This section of the study will look directly at the data which emerged from the questionnaire administered to the sample group of Tourism & Leisure students within Athlone Institute of Technology. The results are illustrated under the two main objectives of this thesis; To ascertain the effectiveness of AIT’s sport department’s present market strategy; To explore the benefits of incorporating new and additional marketing strategies.

4.3.1 Results relating to objective 1

Objective 1: To ascertain the effectiveness of AIT’s sport department’s present market strategy

Questions: 2, 3, 6 & 7 relate to this objective

Question 2 - Do you use the facilities of the AIT gym and or the running track?
Question 2 asked do you use the facilities of the AIT gym and or the running track. 3 from the 20 surveyed used the facilities as a member which represented a percentage figure of 15%. 7 from the 20 surveyed use the facilities as a non member which represents a higher percentage of 35%. Finally 50% of the group surveyed did not use the facilities at all.

![Figure 4.1 – Usage of the current AIT Sports Facilities](image)

**Question 3** – if you are a member which does your membership apply to? Question 3 asked if you are a member to which facility does your membership apply. 15 of the 20 do not use the facilities - this represents a very high figure percentage 75% that are not members. 4 from the 20 surveyed said they are a member of the Gym and 1 from the 20 was a member of the track.

![Figure 4.2: Type of Membership](image)
**Question 6** – Are you a member of a local sports club?

![Member of local sports club](image)

Figure 4.3 Membership of local clubs

Question 6 asked if you were a member of a local sports club. 15 of the 20 (75%) surveyed answered ‘Yes’ they were a member. 25% answered ‘No’. This set against the results of question 2 showing that 50% did not use AIT sports facilities highlights the ineffectiveness of the present marketing strategy, particularly when the majority of those surveyed have an interest in sport.

**Question 7** - Does your Club use AIT Sports Facilities? (Training facilities - Gym, Track and pitches) (Event facilities - pitches and track for matches and meetings)
Question 7 asked if their club used the AIT sporting facilities and if they did whether they used if for the purpose of training or for the purpose of events. 3 from the 20 (15%) surveyed said their club used the AIT facilities from training purposes and again 3 from the 20 (15%) surveyed said that their club used the facilities for event purposes. 0% said that it is used for both and 70% said that their club don’t use the facilities at all, which again is a very large proportion.
4.3.2 Results relating to objective 2

Objective 2 – To explore the benefits of incorporating new and additional marketing strategies

Questions 4 & 10 relate to this objective

**Question 4** – Which of the following factors would influence your decision to become a member of the AIT sporting facilities?

![Figure 4.5: Factors relating to membership decision](image)

Question 4 asked which of the following factors would influence your decision to become a member of the AIT sporting facilities. From the 20 surveyed 10 (50%) chose the type of facility available as their motivation for using the facilities. 9 (45%) from the 20 chose the quality of the gym equipment as their factor for using the sporting facilities. 30% choose Price, 15% chose fitness instructor and 10% choose fitness class. As the provision of international standard facilities is to be the marketing platform for the new sports facility, the results from this question shows that for users this is one of the main factors which would influence them when they are making a membership choice.
Question 10 - Rate the effectiveness of the following Marketing Tools in priority for the new facilities (rate 1 to 6 - 1 being the highest and 6 being the lowest)

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Figure 4.6: Effectiveness of Marketing Tools

Question 10 shows how student in AIT rate the effectiveness of each marketing tool that is currently used by the sports department or could be potentially used for the new facilities. As the table shows Email was rated most effective with 40% of the student giving it number one. Text messaging was most commonly rated as average. Posters were seen as a very effective marketing tool by 30% of the students surveyed. Facebook received mixed opinions but 25% rated it as very effective. Twitter received poor feedback as 21.1% reviewed the marketing tool as very poor. Letters were seen as totally irrelevant as 45% of the survey group rated them as very poor, the same applies to Phone Calls.
Chapter 5

5.1 Conclusion
The aim of this study was to evaluate the benefits of a marketing strategy in promoting the new sports facility at AIT by:

(1) exploring the effectiveness of the present marketing strategies
(2) exploring the benefits of incorporating new and additional marketing strategies;
(3) analysing the factors that impact on the uptake of the sports facilities by the target market.

Each objective was thoroughly investigated and interesting results were uncovered. It was surprising to discover that AIT currently do not have a marketing strategy in place despite having an Olympic Standard running track and FIFA 2 star Astroturf, and that currently they rely on personal contacts to promote these exceptional sporting facilities. It was made quite clear, during the course of the interviews that this would change on completion of the new facilities. It is intended that AIT sports facility will employ a commercial manager. Existing and new relationships will be built upon and expanded. Links will be formed with National sporting bodies such as the FAI, the GAA and Athletic Ireland hopefully with positive results like the FAI making the new indoor facility the venue for the home international Futsal games.

It is also planned to market the new sports facility as a major Events venue, hosting boxing tournaments, athletic meets, conferences, and possibly concerts. The institute also hopes to attract national and international elite sports people, teams and squads to train on campus and to use the new facility as a training camp.

The new sports facility is primarily an educational and student service resource and priority of use will be given to students Monday to Friday. The research has shown that the institute will continue to encourage students to use the facilities with membership subscriptions being subsidised from the revenue stream generated by the commercial side of the venture. Incentives will also be offered for new students to the institute from next September to help encourage them to use the new facilities.
5.2 Recommendations

The author believes that AIT is taking the right decision by appointing a new commercial manager for the facilities. New and comprehensive marketing strategies need to be put in place with marketing tools like social network sites being fully utilised. Links need to be established with all major sporting bodies and partnership arrangements put in place with other compatible service provider. Regular surveys analysing results and measuring agreed targets need to be carried out to ascertain the effectiveness of the new marketing policy.
References


Appendix 1: Cover Letter – Semi-structured Interview

Daniel Seery
Annagh
Ballykeeran
Athlone
Co. Westmeath

17th February 2011
Re: Semi –structured Interview
Bachelor of Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Tourism & Sport Management Programme

Dear -----------

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in the semi-structured interview. It will add greatly to the content of my research project and impact on my over grade.

With regard to the interview itself, this should take no longer that 30 minutes and I enclose a copy of the questions I would like to cover, for your consideration. Should you need clarification on any of the questions, or if you feel unable to answer specific questions please contact by phone or email.

You of course have a say in the format that the interview will take –

1. I would like to use a tape recorder, but if this causes you a difficulty I will just take notes
2. You can choose to be identified by name or remain anonymous
3. You can identify your Organisation by name or it can be referred to in general terms.
4. Your views and opinions can be directly or indirectly quoted in the project.

I would like to stress that the information you provide will only be used for the purpose of the research project and will not be distributed to external sources.

I will be in contact with you next week to arrange an appointment.

Regards

Daniel Seery.
Phone;
Mobile
A00133599@student.ait.ie
Appendix 2: Questions Semi-structured Interviews

Section A – PRESENT POSITION

Question 1

a) What is the current marketing strategy for your organisation’s existing sport facilities?
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b) Which of the following marketing tools do you employ?

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<td>Local/National newspapers</td>
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<td>Leaflets/Flyers</td>
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<td>Promotions/Competitions/Coupons/Free trials</td>
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<td>Dedicated web-site</td>
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<td>Face book</td>
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<td>Blogs</td>
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<td>TV</td>
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<td>Posters</td>
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<td>Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMS (Text Messaging)</td>
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<td>Twitter</td>
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<td>Other – Specify</td>
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</table>

Other – Specify

C) How do you rate their importance/effectiveness?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Question 2 – AIT Staff

a) Who are your present target market?

b) Do you have a breakdown of users - What is your present user mix

   Individual membership: Students _______%
   Staff _______%
   General public _______%
   Pay as you use _______%

   Group membership: Clubs etc. _______%
   Elite athletes/sport persons _______%

c) What % membership of the Institute population has been achieved by your present marketing strategy
   Student population: _____________%
   Institute Staff: ____________%

d) Do you have % figures for the number of local clubs using the facilities. Is it mainly training facilities they require or do they stage matches/ events.

Question 2 – AIT Regional Sports Centre.

a) Who are your present target market?

b) What is your present user mix

   Individual membership: Students ______-%
   General –Adult ______-%
   Pay as you use ______%

   Group membership: Clubs etc. ______-%
Question 3

Which in your opinion took precedents in formulating your existing marketing policy and why?

1. Provision of Training facilities
2. The Staging of events

______________________________________________________________________________
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Question 4

Have you ever considered surveying your present members/user on the effectiveness of your current marketing strategies? If yes – which marketing tools were most effective?

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SECTION B - Position on Completion of New Facilities

Question 5

a) Is there a proposal to change your marketing strategy /how?
What new tools will you employ?
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Question 6

What are your views on the use of new technologies such as Web 2.0 as a marketing tool. Do you intend to make use of social network sites like Facebook, YouTube etc and how will ensure that they will earn your new facilities “good conversation”. Would you plan to use tools like Radian6 to monitor comments or how would you manage this?
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Question 7
Will your target market change when the new facilities are completed?
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Question 8
Who do you view as being your main competition?
Locally:_______________________________________________________________________
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______________________________________________________________________________
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Nationally___________________________________________________________
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Question 9
How will you differentiate your facilities from those of your competitors? What new facilities and services will you provide?
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What will you provide to the end users that will make the experience of using your facilities unique?

Question 10 – AIT Staff

a) Will the new sports facility be used as a part of the overall marketing strategy of the Institute in its role of Educator to attract new students or will it be marketed as a standalone sporting facility?

b) Should the facility be used to fulfill both roles – i.e. an educational facility and a sporting facility do you see any areas of conflict in the provision of services to cover the needs of both of these users.
c) Which service would be given precedents and why?
Appendix 3: Transcript A - Semi-structured Interview

Ciarán O’Cathain – Thursday 3rd March 2011 – 10am

Section A – Present Situation

Question 1

a) What is the current marketing strategy for your organisation’s existing sport facilities?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Well I would think that the marketing strategy we have currently is really more focused on the institute rather than really on the sports facilities, we are in a process currently of indentifying a new post which really will be a marketing post to promote all of the new sports facilities, the institute facilities and AIT as a conference venue and that appointment hopefully will be made by April well mid April I would say by this stage before we could get too buy by this stage we will have a much more strategic focus and I would say here to date it has being a bit of a hit and miss we have got thing really through connections with other sporting bodies that we have got in with but we haven’t really ever gone out and said “ok lets market the AIT sports facilities” and I think that is a weakness of we have been doing and that’s why having now with the new investment that were putting in when you put all the sporting facilities together we really are going to drive it forward.

b) Which of the following marketing tools do you employ?

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<th>Yes / No</th>
<th>Rating Of Importance</th>
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<td>Radio</td>
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<td>Leaflets/Flyers</td>
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[Ciarán O’Cathain] Well we use all of them in terms of the overall marketing of the institute, how much that would be related to the sporting side of the sports facilities would be small, but some of it on text messaging they would certainly use it for some of the athletic need like Fit For Life and all of that but the rest of thing we are generally using in the broader context of selling AIT.

**Question 2 – (AIT Staff Only)**

a) Who are your present target market?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Specifically for sports?

[Interviewer] Yes

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Well currently our target market would be the FAI, the GAA and Athletics Ireland, they would be the three main bodies, I suppose the Rugby would be there too but we haven’t really got a Rugby facility, but they are using the facilities. They would be the three targets that we use currently, now that needs to expand into more community groups, the business community in terms of using the facilities and possible then some other sporting bodies for example the modern pentathlon who have been talking to us about the possibly of using Athlone as a base for their organisation so we will be looking at those but I think the main three bodies will be the FAI, the GAA and Athletics Ireland. I think post the development Athletics Ireland will really be one the key sporting bodies that we are going to have to work very closely
with and the FAI in relation to the Futsal but the other side we will be looking at Boxing, concerts and whole range of activities we can use that facility for so it will broaden.

Question 3
Which in your opinion takes precedents in formulating your existing marketing policy and why?

1) Provision of Training facilities  
2) The Staging of events

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Well I would think currently that we really do not have a full formulated plan market plan for the sports facilities and that’s probably a weakness on our side. When we done the plan originally for those facilities and we looked at the cost there was great intentions to do A,B,C and D a lot of those things haven’t happened and I suppose were lucky in a sense because of the facilities that are there we have got a lot of people knocking on our door looking to use our facilities but now I think we need to strategically look at it, we really need to get out there, we need to have clear plan in place with a marketing back up support in place so we can really sell the facility and I think that is what needs to happen when the new person is appointed.

Question 4
Have you ever considered surveying your present members/user on the effectiveness of your current marketing strategies? If yes – which marketing tools were most effective?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] The groups that have been using the facilities such as Athletics Ireland, some of the local football teams we haven’t really done it in a formal way we use a much more informal technique to get feedback, for example last year when we hosted the international celtic games on the track, while we didn’t do a formal survey around the venue we did get huge amounts of feedback that it was the best event they have in 20 years for both the facilities and accommodation, this was all about the whole package we were able to sell where as in other
venues that whole package was not necessarily there. The feedback has been very good in term of the Mondo surface that’s on the track is the only one of its kind in Ireland, Mondo are probably one the biggest suppliers in the world, they have supplied the tracks for the last 10 Olympics and will supply London aswel, so that given us a distinct advantage over other venues and on the FIFA two star all weather pitch there are only two of its kind in Ireland, one here and one in Portlaoise so because we have that its help. People think the facilities are very good. Are we using it to the best effect? No were not in my view marketing sufficiently and I think we could treble the business that were doing in here, at least.

SECTION B - Position on Completion of New Facilities

Question 5

Is there a proposal to change your marketing strategy /how?

What new tools will you employ?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Well there is a proposal to change the marketing strategy and it not necessarily to change it to actually put one in place. We are going to appoint a commercial manager that is going to have to draw up a very clear strategy. Now what that will be and what tools will they use I would not want to limit them in terms of what I think they would use but a lot, but a lot of it would entail building up a relationship with a lot of the sporting bodies because they are the ones that are going to be using it, we need then to be working with the promoters for example the Boxers they could go to have an event in Castlebar but it promoter that really drives that agenda, the facility here would probably be able to take more people in than Castlebar or some of the other venues so we really need to be looking at that. Now I would think that a brochure would have to be put together, a traditional type of brochure an email one and link onto the website which will have that brochure on it and I think an awful lot of it for the first six month will be about getting out and establishing a retour with the national governing bodies and going to see if you were going to have a Boxing promotion why would you go to Castlebar, why would you go to Athlone or why would you go to the national stadium? They’re going to need to take a look at those criteria and they are going to have to come up with a very clear strategy of how they can meet, I have done figures of what I would be expecting from them in terms of
number and usage using that facility then we are going to have to come up with a plan to back it up. There will be two components of it, one will be the external – the revenue and the revenue stream which will come in which will be critically important to us but the other side internally, there are 6,000 people on this campus every day; we have about 500 people using the facilities currently, we need to get that up to 2,500 that might either use the gym, the indoor track or they might go in and play badminton, basketball or use the soccer pitches. We need to broaden that base within AIT and then with the community itself so there will be AIT, the local region and then the national element so there will be the three components in our marketing strategy. Each of those will need a different approach on how they will be used.

Question 6

What are your views on the use of new technologies such as Web 2.0 as a marketing tool? Do you intend to make use of social network sites like Facebook, YouTube etc and how will ensure that they will earn your new facilities “good conversation”. Would you plan to use tools like Radian6 to monitor comments or how would you manage this?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Yes we are and all ready for example the new facility is up on the AIT website and we know that a high number of people have gone in to look at it especially from the athletics bodies also from the FAI so already by just having it up there on the link and the plan on it we have people hitting on it because it has been on the media. We have dealt with media with press releases now not a whole lot because we really want to get into the project before we really start pushing it but all ready were taking bookings and these bookings are coming from what is on the website not because we have gone and said its going to be here but I think from January to the end of March most of weekends on the indoor arena have been booked out at this stage. We would envisage that happening anyways but that is what is coming of the website but I think all this issues like Facebook and YouTube can be used and I think what we will find is a lot of people that do use the facilities, I mean I have a son who is an international athlete and he might run for example he was running last weekend in Loughborough but he will have something on Facebook what time he ran, Athletics Ireland are picking up their times through the international group and will put it up on their website so we will get a huge spin off from people actually coming down and saying I was in Athlone and I finished first, second or third or I ran crap or whatever so what you will get is a huge spin off from the crowd that going to use it. I think the benefit is how we are going to use it and I think our view is that if that track starts
producing really fast times which it is built to do then that social network will expand and what you will get then on an international platform international athletes wanting to come and run on it because if they think they can run, come here and get a qualifying time here for the Olympics, European Championships or the World Championships then they come to the site, now we can do some of that for the way that will happen will be through their own social media.

**Question 7**

Will your target market change when the new facilities are completed?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Yes they will change. We will be able to use it for a much broader target market, we will also be able to use it as a conference centre and we will also be able to use the John McCormack hall as a concert venue, it gives us a much broader scope of what we can use the facilities for. One of the critical things for the institute over the next 3 to 5 years will be its capacity to generate additional revenue streams because certainly the budget streams coming from government will be greatly reduced so therefore we have to find a shortfall and by using some of these facilities it will bring in a shortfall.

**Question 8**

Who do you view as being your main competition?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Well in terms of the Athletics track there is no competition, there is an arena if you could it an arena in Nenagh which they have been using for the last 20 years, in essence it a cowshed – no heat, toilets are in very poor condition, it’s a very third world facility having said that it was there and it was designed to do something. So there will be no competition for the indoor track currently now that could change in the next 5 to 10 years. In terms of the Futsal we are being told that there is another arena being built that will fit 1,500 people so that kind of thing were building and the way were building it is to meet a niche that is there so from that perspective locally and nationally both for the Futsal and the indoor arena there is very few facilities that have seating capacity for 1,500 spectators and with the possibility of bringing in additional seating into it so there isn’t going to be main competition. If you look at any of the other Higher Education Institutions for example Limerick the only thing we won’t have compared to them is the swimming pool and our view on that is that we would never build a
swimming pool because we down want to be in completion with the Regional Sports Centre we work in partnership with them but there will be no other Universities or Institutes of Technology that will have the indoor arena so we will probably go from being mid ranking in terms of our current sporting facilities to number one in a very short space of time. From a competition perspective we will be pulling a lot in. Because we are such a central location from the road infrastructure, for example we are only an hour from Dublin, 45 minutes from Galway and from any other part of the island your only about 2 and a half hours so it’s very accessible now so I think we will benefit from it. So I would think in terms of our main competition there isn’t locally and there isn’t nationally from the track end of it, ok you can always have a hall and lots of places have halls but they don’t have the capacity for seating where we will have the hall with the room for seating so that will give us a significant advantage.

Question 9

How will you differentiate your facilities from those of your competitors? What new facilities and services will you provide?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Well I think in differentiating our facilities certainly in terms of the track there won’t be one like it here in the country. On the Futsal side of it with the spectators side of it I think will differentiate it. The other two things that would differentiate it is significant car parking on the site, we will have all of the other services for the canteen, feeding the whole lot of them. Within the complex then there will be the gym, the high performance gym, support centre, medical centre, physiotherapist room’s aswel as the ice baths, the saunas and the steam rooms so you will have that whole component that not necessarily you will get from any other venue around. If we were to host an International Athletic meet here which we would hope to do not in 2012 but in 2013 the physio suite would all be in operation so if you would need a rub out before or you need a rub out after it will be there, you will have your medical facility there, we will be able to do the blood testing a full analysis voc testing all of the other testing the biomechanical testing we can do. All that will be available there on site, most other places would not have it, what we’re looking at here is a much more integrated system and what we would hope is that some of the national bodies would actually put their elite academies here on the campus because
we would be able to provide all of that and I think that in itself will differentiate AIT and the facilities from anything else that out there or anything else that’s planned out there in Ireland.

What will you provide to the end users that will make the experience of using your facilities unique?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Well I think my own view on that would be I go all around the world with athletics because I have an interest in Athletics and what we will have here is a facility that will match any other best that is around the world so for any of the Irish athletes whether it would be Derval O’Rourke or any of the other top athletes what they would have here would be a venue where they could compete in second to none and matching the best in what they have competed in around the world. For us in terms of what it would do for end users will do this, if we are having a championship here because of the caliber of the facilities we have here we would be able to attract in top international class athletes to run on the because where as currently we cannot get any top class international athletes to come in and run against the Irish athletes because we just don’t have the facility so if you have the proper facility it in itself will bring it in so for the end user / the athlete if they can run here in Athlone against some of the top European sprinters or hurdlers or middle distance runners then the fact that they don’t have to go overseas to do that will certainly be a big plus. Now with the other facility and in terms of how that will work, Futsal is really gaining a hold here in Ireland and the FAI are currently in the process or appointing a technical director, it is going to be a big push over the next 5 years and the fact that we will be able to have a venue that will be able to host international standard competition means the FAI will be able to bring in international teams that can play here, for the end users that they can have proper facilities, it is not just about a quick change, being able to get physiotherapy if you need physiotherapy after or before it and if you have a small injury or anything else that you will be able to get into an ice bath for the 10 minutes to take the swelling down, if you wanted to go into the steam room all of those other ancillary services that were there will mean for the end user it would be a huge change to what their used to. Currently what happens is you will arrive in your gear, you will run and you go home and shower at home. This type of facility will give a much more professional experience and I think that is what the end user will see. One of our unique selling points is the experience that athletes will have whether they are on the track or in the hall will be saying God that great down there, I never used an ice bath that would probably be our unique selling experience and it will be in a controlled environment aswel.
Question 10 – (AIT Staff Only)

a) Will the new sports facility be used as a part of the overall marketing strategy of the Institute in its role of Educator to attract new students or will it be marketed as a standalone sporting facility?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] It will be marketed in two formats. 1. It will be marketed as an overall component of the fabric and structure of AIT for the student and for the staff that would be one aspect of it. That has to be done because a lot of the funding that we are using has come through over revenue we have generated over the last 6 years to support student services and student infrastructural development so having done that it will have to be marketed very much for them, as a unique selling point well we have the best sports facilities in the country we are going to have elite squads training here. If you’re a professional footballer, Galicic player or you’re just a jogger or casual sport person you have these facilities and you will be encouraged to use them. The other side then we will have a very clear marketing policy for selling it as a standalone facility particularly Friday, Saturday and Sunday when most students are gone from the institute and all through the summer months. That will have to be sold that way because the revenue stream coming in then will ensure 1. That it is viable – that we can keep the maintenance and updating it as we need to do that so there will be two very distinct marketing plans around it but we certainly will be selling it as one of our things, in fact in China all ready on our new Chinese brochure that we are using they even have the projected images actually in the brochure to say it will be finished by the end 2011. So we are starting to use it as part of a student perspective. Will it impact on student? My view would be yes because students do look at facilities. If we look at the UK there are currently about 14,000 students studying, if you talk to them their all gone for different reasons, probably 1000 to 1500 are gone for sports because of sports facilities over there whether it would be rugby, cricket, boxing, athletics, cycling, basketball etc they are gone there because the facilities are there. We have never been in that position to attract that kind of student here in Ireland. I think we will be able to that on a par with any of the top UK universities. But I would say to you that in terms of the stand alone facility if this facility gets a brilliant reputation of a great facility that will impact on the whole marketing of the institute. We will see student that might want to do business studies that might want to do sports courses, we have 3 new programmes that are going to start next September sports exercise and Physiology and Nutrition and Health Science which again the facility will be a critical
component of that, they will be able to use them for a lot of the practical stuff on the course. Marketing it as a standalone facility will impact on student perception more so that than the student perception impacting on the stand alone facility so you get a win win from the stand alone.

b) Should the facility be used to fulfill both roles – i.e. an educational facility and a sporting facility do you see any areas of conflict in the provision of services to cover the needs of both of these users.

[Ciarán O’Cathain] No I don’t, I think both are critically supportive of each because without getting the commercial side of it in you’re not going to be able to maintain it to the standard nor would be able to keep to rates you would be charging a student to use the facility. Well if we were going to build it just for the students we would probably have to put in an additional charge on the student services or another charge for every usage of the facility. What you will get is cross subsidization in it where the commercial side of it will cross subsidize the use of it for students internally which will be a big plus for students.

c) Which service would be given precedents and why?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] Describe what you mean? Do you mean the student services?

[Interviewer] Yes would it be more aimed towards student services or commercial?

[Ciarán O’Cathain] I think Monday to Friday will be very much toward the student services, that when the demand for that will be we may have an odd thing on during the week but primarily if will be used for student services during the week, it’s the Friday evening through till Sunday is where we will see the much more commercial development of it and then outside of term time like Easter, Christmas and Summer they are other times where we would be selling it externally but during the academic year the students will have the priority on it during the week. We will for example run a winter league in the winter months maybe on a Wednesday evening for sprinters or maybe middle distance but that’s just a couple of hours a week and there will be other things probably on in the hall that will be used but remember we will have expanded the
facilities significantly so even if we had to take one of those halls out the facilities will still be available for students. There would be a balance of both

Appendix 4: Transcript B - Semi-structured Interview

Brian Lynch – Monday 28th February 2011 – 12pm

Section A – PRESENT POSITION

Question 1

a) What is the current marketing strategy for your organisation’s existing sport facilities?

[Brian Lynch] At present the marketing of AIT operates largely on a responsive basis. I suppose there are two thing that we need to point out, one the sports facilities we have form part of the student recruitment strategy as they increase the attractiveness of AIT as a college of choice if you like so on that side we pointing out that AIT is not just an academic provider of programmes and degrees but that there is a wider more holistic form of education here which includes fitness for life and a broader range of things. So on that sense the more impressive our facilities the more attractive AIT is to potential students. In regard to a marketing strategy for the facilities themselves I suppose at the moment we are at a midpoint in terms of the current outdoor facilities and the impending new indoor arena. The new arena will have its own support staff in terms of a commercial manager or some kind of an operating manager to drive all of that and when that come on stream in conjunction with the other facilities that we have a defined marketing strategy. At the moment what pertains is that it is largely personal contacts that are there between the sports manager and various sporting bodies so in terms of personal contacts people need training facilities or they want to host certain competitions. So between the sports manager and the president they would be instrumental in terms of securing events for the college. It at that level of personal rather that a defined strategy to recruit users or clubs.
b) Which of the following marketing tools do you employ?

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How do you rate their importance/effectiveness?

[Brian Lynch] We nearly use all of them. Yes we use radio but it depends on what you mean by radio, do you mean radio advertising or radio editorial content, radio advertising rarely except for particular events that we might be hosting again this is in terms of general AIT marketing than in terms of something more sports specific. It is very important in terms of getting information out to parents and adults particularly through the established stations for example i105 – 107. Local Regional newspapers, Yes we are pretty much in at the regional’s every week of the year, nationals much less so it depends on the importance of a news story or an event that would have taken place here on campus. Hugely important again in terms of shaping and forming opinion
and letting people know about particular things. From a sports point of view the indoor arena got a huge amount of coverage locally and nationally with the various athletics writers commenting on it. Leaflets and Flyers we tend to produce less of does. We are in the process of creating a new sports promotional leaflet which will highlight the facilities we will have. Promotions/Competitions/Coupons/Free trials; not really something we would use. Dedicated web-site; There is an AIT college site – sports is part of that but it not a key feature. We are looking at creating a serious of micro sites which sports would form part of. Facebook yes, AIT is one of the most visited college in Ireland; it’s in the top 10 if you look up the social media monitor. Blogs – the president has a blog that is updated periodically. TV is much more occasional thing to be honest with you, again it depend on news content. We are working with Nationwide from RTE in terms of AIT 40th anniversary show. Posters again are events driven. Email marketing would tie in with email news lettering. The majority of our perspective student don’t even use email so there no benefit to do that. SMS (Text Messaging) – Occasionally. Twitter – Yes we have a twitter account it takes a feed from Facebook and that’s the main way that populated.

Question 3

Which in your opinion took precedents in formulating your existing marketing policy and why?

1) Provision of Training facilities
2) The Staging of events

[Brian Lynch] From my point of view the two of them kind of tie in together. Both are an opportunity to invite large groups of people but an event because of the viewership is going to attract more people in. The training is simply just going to have the team. For me events are bigger but if you take the international rugby under 20 teams training here that becomes a news event so for me then that become significant from a news point of view. But overall the staging of events would have greater weigh.

Question 4

Have you ever considered surveying your present members/user on the effectiveness of your current marketing strategies? If yes – which marketing tools were most effective?
[Brian Lynch] I you are looking sports wise then the answer is no. We haven’t isolated sports users to assess marketing strategies but as I said we don’t have a specific sports marketing strategy so that isn’t particularly going to work. In terms of the other stuff that we do, yes we do survey premier league guidance councilors it has to be said and perspective students where we would regularly write out to them and get them to assess more particularly marketing tools so things like the college website, the prospectus and our schools liaison strategy to see how useful they find that. Really what we are assessing are the usefulness of those tools in terms of the user getting information from it. Which is the most effective? The website is the most widely used of the marketing tools particularly for perspective students but the college prospectus because it is a printed publication people tend to rate it very highly because it is user friendly type of thing.

SECTION B - Position on Completion of New Facilities

Question 5

a) Is there a proposal to change your marketing strategy /how? What new tools will you employ?

[Brian Lynch] In terms of student recruitment it is not going to result in a change. What will change though is in terms of the indoor arena needing it own dedicated management team. Because of the scale of the building it is going to need external users to come in to make it worthwhile and employ it to its full extent so from that point of view there will now be a new commercial and marketing strategy to support it. In terms of what tools, I can’t really say in terms of what tools specifically we will use except the ones that we use at the moment work effectively and then after that you could be looking at much more personal engagement with various sports bodies. I think in terms of this office with the new facility we will be here to offer support and expertise to them but it will be a partnership approach really.

Question 6

What are your views on the use of new technologies such as Web 2.0 as a marketing tool. Do you intend to make use of social network sites like Facebook, YouTube etc and how will ensure
that they will earn your new facilities “good conversation”. Would you plan to use tools like Radian6 to monitor comments or how would you manage this?

[Brian Lynch] What we use at the moment are Facebook, YouTube, Flicker and Twitter they are the four main channels, we have dedicated AIT channels on all of them. They vary in terms of how effectively they are used. YouTube we intend to imbed on the main college website and anything that happens here at this stage, we record it then post to YouTube and then imbed on the main college page. In terms of Facebook we have 2,500 friends which is a fairly intensive footprint. Twitter is much less so, it is only about 280. Flicker is only starting out. The thing that I see them being critical to is in terms of allowing a two way conversation. Traditional conversation is a one way conversation type of thing, Facebook allows people to come back to you and give you opinions, criticism and positive feedback and so on. That has been evident for example with the new sports facilities anytime we have posted up a story regarding the facility already a significant number of people indicated that they like the thing. At the present it is largely unmonitored, we do use various social media tracking devises not Radian6 parse but there are other ones that we use just to see what people are saying about the place. We use Meltwater as a media monitoring company. It picks up anything online relating to AIT.

Question 7
Will your target market change when the new facilities are completed?

[Brian Lynch] I suppose there will be a dedicated market in terms of the users of the facilities in terms of sports clubs, national governing bodies. The fact that the place with have a 3500 seating capacity will mean that we are now opened up for conferences and maybe for concerts. That is all new customers specific to the sporting facilities. In terms of the broader market for the college no it’s not going to change it but what it does do is strengthen our proposition, makes AIT more attractive and you know there is a certain cache about language when you say that you have world class facilities and be able to show perspective students the fact that your running track is of Olympic standard, that your Astroturf is off FIFA 2 star standard you know that gives strength to your argument that if you come to AIT you going to have an education that is as good as any in the world.
Question 8

Who do you view as being your main competition?

[Brian Lynch] I don’t know sporting wise. Student wise would be both Galway colleges. Local and national are very similar due to our location here in Athlone; we are only an hour from Dublin and an hour from Galway.

Question 9

How will you differentiate your facilities from those of your competitors? What new facilities and services will you provide?

[Brian Lynch] I suppose the differentiating fact is the quality of the facilities themselves, it’s the investments we have made; it’s the international standards they adhere to and that’s the facts side of things. The other part of it then would be the human relations of the strength of contacts we have got with the national sporting bodies, the various governing bodies and so on which have been built up over a number of years and they operate at an excellent level in terms of the GGA, the IRFU, the FAI, Athletics Ireland, The Boxing Association. Often times I suppose when you look at these things there is a certain financial value that can be attached to the college investment itself that we have made we have quantified it in terms of 2 million on the existing outdoor facilities, 9 / 10 million on the new indoor ones and you can say that to people and that pitches you at a particular level but then you also have got the good will factor that differentiates you from others the fact that people come here and they will have an excellent quality experience and that important in terms of you’re a competition organiser and you are inviting members of the public in you don’t want people bad mouthing your events similarly we don’t want people well AIT was crap we want the complete converse of that, we want people saying they went to Athlone – it was very easy to access, parking was brilliant, food was brilliant, facilities were superb, athletes had super training facilities – that’s an event point of view, at a training point of view the same applies but its more the longer relationship you might have with a club or team. The new facilities will see the introduction of new college courses which will enhance our scope.
What will you provide to the end users that will make the experience of using your facilities unique?

[Brian Lynch] I think simply the best possible experience that they can expect so that all of their expectations would have been superseded like if I can give the example of the community games because that is the largest event of its scale in the country. People had been going to Mosney for years and despite the neglected state of the facilities people were very fond of it and they tended to overlook the shortcomings that the venue had now we were able to guarantee the fact the kids were going to be able to participate in state of the art facilities where there wasn’t the possibly of a class roof falling on top of someone’s head. That effectively is the easy part. The bigger and harder part to replicate is the experience. I mean AIT has been long talked of especially by students as a home away from home and a very friendly college so what we have done is taken that experience and expertise and we’ve tried to instil that in visitors of the college with the same level of hands on care that is available to our fulltime and part time student and that is driven from the very top and I mean one of the things here is the personal committed and involved of the president because he has a huge interest and passion about all of this. So having him drives it then ensures that permeates down through the rest of the organisation. I can’t imagine any other college in the country whether its NUIG or UL the community games being held on their campus and the president of the university being out on the line with the starting gun, I just don’t see it happening but it happens here and I think that’s what makes the difference, people see that and they think we are important to AIT, they appreciate the fact that we have come here and that’s what makes it unique.
Appendix 5: Transcript C - Semi-structured Interview

Gordon Brett – Friday 4th March – 9.15am

Section A – Present Situation

Question 1

a) What is the current marketing strategy for your organisation’s existing sport facilities?

[Gordon Brett] I suppose we are looking at target markets number one is our current student base, number two is our staff base, number three would be local clubs and number four would be looking at new areas for example new course that could be attached to the facilities. They would be the four main key areas that we are looking to create markets in or enhance.

b) Which of the following marketing tools do you employ?

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Depending on the event or activity we would definitely use radio, we would use local and national newspapers, we would use Leaflets/Flyers for maybe 5k races, Promotions/Competitions have been used at times, free trials have been used in our fitness suite, Dedicated website we just have pages of the main AIT website but it is possible that we will set up a dedicated website we need a great web presence that is one area we need to improve, Facebook AIT again have a dedicated Facebook page and we also have Alumni page and we have archived all the sport fixtures on those, Blogs not at present, TV no we wouldn’t generally advertise on TV but our facilities have been prominent on TV in the last 12 months, Posters yes for various event on campus and off campus, email defiantly, text messaging yes, twitter no.

Question 2 – (AIT Staff Only)

a) Who are your present target market?

Well our number one target market is the current student base. Within the sport department sport is an ancillary activity as such but we realise student are here to pass exams and get qualified but as secondary aspect of college life we feel we are very important but the current student vase is what we are looking at number one and these facilities and built primarily as a student service but also then in order to maintain them there needs to be a commercial element

b) Do you have a breakdown of users - What is your present user mix

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<td>Students</td>
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<td>Staff</td>
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<td>General public</td>
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<td>Pay as you use</td>
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c) What % membership of the Institute population has been achieved by your present marketing strategy
Question 3

Which in your opinion takes precedents in formulating your existing marketing policy and why?

a) Provision of Training facilities
b) The Staging of events

[Gordon Brett] The priority would be number 1 the provision of training facilities. Four years ago before we had the FIFA 2 star pitch we had one grass pitch to train all our teams on with lights and this was serious barrier to participation was the lack of training facilities. Soccer, GAA and Rugby teams had to train off campus but now the majority of sessions are on campus. If you look at the development of soccer where there are now four men’s teams on the campus. This couldn’t have happened without the new facilities coming on stream. The staging of events is going to become more important in the next 12 months when the new facility is built. Because we have the use of four main pitches on campus and the use of willow park across the road and with space of three indoor hall which will be able to host a huge number of events and again in terms of staging events a huge issue is dressing rooms which are a little but hampered at the moment so once we have ten or twelve new dressing rooms within the new facility its will open a bigger market to us like one leads into another at the moment but the priority is training facilities.

Question 4

Have you ever considered surveying your present members/user on the effectiveness of your current marketing strategies? If yes – which marketing tools were most effective?

[Gordon Brett] We haven’t done anything in a long number of years but at present we have put together a business plan for the new facility and I know the president office has a needs analysis
done but in terms of us getting straight into our student population not in a couple of years now. I suppose with the new marketing strategy is just a blank canvas at the moment, just start fresh.

**SECTION B - Position on Completion of New Facilities**

**Question 5**

Is there a proposal to change your marketing strategy /how?

What new tools will you employ?

[Gordon Brett] I suppose the first thing we will do is take a look at our current student base and the first year intake next year which will lead us into 2012, we would look to go direct to students for example when students receive their bank giro to pay their capitation fee’s that we would also have a giro in that pack, a once of payment which will give them full use of all the facilities for 12 months, so that a direct marketing system that we haven’t used yet and some of it is down to not having the administration know how inside. In terms of outside strategy we are developing relationships with a lot of the key sporting organistaions for instance we received $50,000 from the Westmeath GAA county board and $50,000 from the Leinster Council to develop the outdoor pitches with lights so basically the strategy is to create a relationship with those bodies. We are meeting John Delaney from the FAI in the next few weeks to discuss the possibly of becoming the home venue for the Futsal internationals. The FAI seem very open to the idea. Other areas we will be looking at will be boxing events you the Brian Peters promotions the Hunky Dorys events. We feel we can hold up to 4000 for them boxing events. We are also talking with Athletics Ireland about the possibly of them setting up an elite academy here so that would be one of my areas would be developing elite academies with all of our strong sports as in we have a relationship at the moment with Buccaneers RFC and we have just had one meeting
with Athlone Town FC and that with schoolboy league to whom we have a great relationship with, in turn they are our best customers on the all weather pitch so we are trying to enhance those relationships.

**Question 6**

What are your views on the use of new technologies such as Web 2.0 as a marketing tool? Do you intend to make use of social network sites like Facebook, YouTube etc and how will ensure that they will earn your new facilities “good conversation”. Would you plan to use tools like Radian6 to monitor comments or how would you manage this?

[Gordon Brett] I don’t know much about Web 2.0 to be honest. Social networking sites definitely, YouTube is something that we are ready to start dipping our toe into. We bought a college camera there a couple of years back to record fixtures and events. We recently bought a new laptop specifically for that camera for us to create movies we have the pinnacle 11.5 package. We have done some of that but not enough, we have an AIT channel on YouTube through the marketing communications officer so definitely that something that will need to be used. Radian6 I am not too sure about its functionality but if it’s useful to use and brings us feedback from customers the most definitely but i still think you can’t away from face to face conversation, generally when you are dealing with the outside market for example the GAA or the FAI you will have one point of contact who will be your feedback system and I think that is going to be very important. In terms of our own student it will be useful but we still will demand from our staff that our front of house people engage with customers and from that feedback I think we can work most effective.

**Question 7**

Will your target market change when the new facilities are completed?
No I think it will just be expanded. Our student market will still stay the same, we will still continue the outside users like we currently do and we will be also looking to expand into other areas as I mentioned athletics Ireland have fully expanded their business with us that they are all ready using our outdoor track, we need to get them into our indoor track, get them using our gym, our sports performance lab. Similar with the FAI we met with their high performance director, he is very interested in our facilities and holding some elite camps here. The Westmeath GAA are hoping to run a hurling camp here this summer using the accommodation across the road. This is all new business for us. One of the hotels in town have all ready held a number of discussions with us about attracting teams like premiership rugby clubs, championship soccer’s teams etc and they want to put a package together whereby they provide food and accommodation and they would use our facilities.

Question 8
Who do you view as being your main competition?

Locally I suppose you could say the Athlone Regional Sports Centre is competition but until such time that our new sports facilities are built and when we decide whether does fitness facilities attached to the building are going to be open completely to the public or only to students and staff initially and certain outside clubs. We won’t be able to say whether they are serious competition or not. I think at senior management level we have an agreement with the Athlone Town Council that we won’t replicate any of their facilities, that why we don’t need to build a swimming pool, to be fair we have a very good relationship with the sports centre, they offer their facility free of charge for the community games weekends – we also make our facilities free but that was a big boost to our application but there is a very good relationship there. In terms of the RSC their all weather pitch is more of a hockey style surface ours is a FIFA 2 star so there a little bit different, there expanding their gym so they have a good set up, they are looking mainly at squads. There will be competition but I think there will be enough business there for everybody. Nationally really our competition really is… going back to what I said at the very start our main core business is third level students and teaching them and qualifying them so there is a big fight there to attract them. Sport is a very good PR tool in itself to attract students to the college and I suppose the competition would be the high end sports
colleges UCD, DCU and UL there the main competition, but I think when we build these facilities we will be superior in many areas to these colleges. We a little bit landlocked here in terms of outdoor pitches which leave us a bit restricted but the fact that at least 3 of our pitches will be either all weather or sand based makes the very weather tolerant so there will be high usage on those.

Question 9

How will you differentiate your facilities from those of your competitors? What new facilities and services will you provide?

[Gordon Brett] The number one key difference will be the development of an IAAF standard athletic track. That will be international standard; it was also have an 80 metre sprint lane. It will also have suspended seating. We will be the first dedicated indoor arena, there is one in Nenagh but the spectator facilities would not be up to spec for real serious national championships. That would be our unique selling point but also an outdoor track as well. This will make us one of the few facilities on the British Isles to have bother facilities together.

What will you provide to the end users that will make the experience of using your facilities unique?

[Gordon Brett] Well I think it is the whole package, we will be a one stop shop for instance if an Athlete decides to base themselves here in Athlone. If the weather is poor they have ample indoor facilities, we will have a sports performance lab. In terms of preparation, we have physio suites there. In terms of training we have indoor and outdoor facilities. On campus we will have ample car parking underneath the building where 166 car park spaces will be allocated. We will have canteen facilities in terms of food. We also have them gym facilities.

Question 10 – (AIT Staff Only)
a) Will the new sports facility be used as a part of the overall marketing strategy of the Institute in its role of Educator to attract new students or will it be marketed as a standalone sporting facility?

[Gordon Brett] Yes it going to be marketed both ways. In terms of attracting new student we have found that sport is a huge selling point for colleges, I know a couple of years ago IT Tralee done a study on why students go to their college and sport ranked 2nd I think so they focused on that for a few years. In terms of attracting students and Ciarán might have mention this earlier we have been involved in developing a host of new course to complement the facility. As a standalone facility we have to get more involved with the national governing bodies.

b) Should the facility be used to fulfill both roles – i.e. an educational facility and a sporting facility do you see any areas of conflict in the provision of services to cover the needs of both of these users.

[Gordon Brett] Generally no because the scale of building is massive and both will be able to bounce of each other and work together to get the best possible results.

c) Which service would be given precedents and why?

[Gordon Brett] The student population will be given number one choice. That is why the facilities exist so students should get priority. Commercial considerations would have to be considered but usually we could get around those. Now for instance the whole month of November is booked up with the graduations, careers fair and open days therefore you tend to lose out on both sides a little bit.
Appendix 6: Transcript D - Semi-structured Interview

Margo Redmond

Section A – Present Situation

Question 1

a) What is the current marketing strategy for your organisation’s existing sport facilities?

Target Marketing

b) Which of the following marketing tools do you employ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing Tool</th>
<th>Yes / No</th>
<th>Rating Of Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local / National newspapers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflets / Flyers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions / Competitions / Coupons / Free trials</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated web-site</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part b – In the first Column state whether the marketing tool is used or not. In the second column rate the importance of the tool 1 to 4.

1 – Essential,

2 – Very Important,

3 – Useful,

4 – Least Important.

**Question 2 – (Athlone Regional Sports Centre Staff Only)**

a) Who are your present target market?

   4yrs – 80yrs +

b) What is your present user mix

   Individual membership: Students 15%

   General –Adult 70%

   Pay as you use 10%
Group membership: Clubs etc. 5%

Question 3

Which in your opinion takes precedents in formulating your existing marketing policy and why?

1. Provision of Training facilities
2. The Staging of events

Provision of Training

Question 4

Have you ever considered surveying your present members/user on the effectiveness of your current marketing strategies? If yes – which marketing tools were most effective?

Yes

Online Survey

SECTION B - Position on Completion of New Facilities

Question 5

Is there a proposal to change your marketing strategy / how?

What new tools will you employ?
No

**Question 6**

What are your views on the use of new technologies such as Web 2.0 as a marketing tool? Do you intend to make use of social network sites like Facebook, YouTube etc and how will ensure that they will earn your new facilities “good conversation”. Would you plan to use tools like Radian6 to monitor comments or how would you manage this?

Currently our face book page is managed by on site staff and this will continue.

**Question 7**

Will your target market change when the new facilities are completed?

Yes

**Question 8**

Who do you view as being your main competition?

Locally: Main competition would be the hotels with gym facilities

Nationally N/A

**Question 9**

How will you differentiate your facilities from those of your competitors? What new facilities and services will you provide?

Space & Choice with a wide range of facilities for different sport disciplines

What will you provide to the end users that will make the experience of using your facilities unique?

An amazing atmosphere to work out in combined with excellent staff to guide them on their journey.
Appendix 7: Questionnaire email

From: A00133599@student.ait.ie

To: 3rd & 4th Year student Tourism and Leisure Dept.

Sent: 23rd February 2011

Hi

My name is Daniel Seery and I am studying for my Degree in Tourism & Sport Management at AIT

As part of this course I have to write a project and I am conducting a survey on “The Marketing Strategies for the new sports facilities at AIT”.

I have attached a link to this survey in this e-mail and would be very much obliged if you would take the time to complete it.

[Survey link]

The survey does not ask for any personal details and all information provided will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

It should only take 2 or 3 minutes to complete and all replies will be greatly appreciated
Thank you for your time

Regards

Daniel Seery

Appendix 8: Questionnaire
New Sporting Facilities

1. Gender
   - Male
   - Female

2. Do you use the facilities of the AIT gym and or the running track
   - As a member
   - As a non member
   - Don't use

3. If you are a member - which facility does your membership apply to?
   - Gym
   - Track

4. Which of the following factors would influence your decision to become a member of the AIT sporting facilities?
   - Price
   - Type of Facilities available
   - Fitness Instructor
   - Fitness classes
   - Quality of Gym equipment

5. How were you made aware that those sport facilities were available when you first arrived at AIT?

6. Are you a member of a Local Sports Club?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Does your Club use AIT Sports Facilities?
   (Training facilities - Gym, Track and pitch)
   (Event facilities - pitches and track for matches and meetings)
   - Training Facilities
   - Event Facilities
   - Both
   - Neither
8. How does AIT Sports inform you about membership rates / special deals / news of events?
- Student Email
- Personal Email
- Letter
- Posters
- Text message
- Phone call
- Other - Specify

Other (please specify) [ ]

9. How do you rate the Marketing strategy used currently by the AIT Sports Department?
- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

10. Rate the effectiveness of the following Marketing Tools in priority for the new facilities (rate 1 to 6 - 1 being the highest and 6 being the lowest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<td>Email</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
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<td>Phone Call</td>
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[Done]
### Appendix 9: Overall Questionnaire Results

20/60 Returned Questionnaires – 33.3% response rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>Do you use the facilities of the AIT gym and for track the running track?</td>
<td>As a member</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>As a non member</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dont Use</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>If you are a member - which facility does your membership apply to?</td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Track</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>Which of the following factors would influence your decision to become a member of the AIT sporting facilities?</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Type of Facilities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fitness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fitness Class</td>
<td></td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of Gym Equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>How were you made aware that these sport facilities were available when you first arrived at AIT?</td>
<td>Tour of college on opening day</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Email</td>
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<td>Posters</td>
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<td>Word of Mouth</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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<td>Wasnt</td>
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<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td>Are you a member of a local sports club?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</table>
**Question 7)** Does your Club use AIT Sports Facilities? (Training facilities - Gym, Track and pitches) (Event facilities - pitches and track for matches and meetings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Training Facilities</th>
<th>Event Facilities</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
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<td>16.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
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**Question 8)** How does AIT Sports inform you about membership rates / special deals / news of events?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Student Email</th>
<th>Personal Email</th>
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<td>16.7%</td>
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<td>66.7%</td>
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**Question 9)** How do you rate the Marketing strategy used currently by the AIT Sports Department?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<th>Very Poor</th>
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<td>Percentage</td>
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<td>42.1%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
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</table>

**Question 10)** Rate the effectiveness of the following Marketing Tools in priority for the new facilities(rate 1 to 6 - 1 being the highest and 6 being the lowest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Posters</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
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| Rating |       |      |         |          |         |         |            |
| 1      | 8     | 5    | 1       | 3        | 2       | 3       | 6          |
| 2      | 4     | 3    | 6       | 5        | 2       | 0       | 0          |
| 3      | 4     | 2    | 4       | 3        | 4       | 1       | 1          |
| 4      | 1     | 6    | 4       | 4        | 3       | 2       | 2          |
| 5      | 1     | 1    | 2       | 2        | 4       | 5       | 2          |
| 6      | 2     | 3    | 3       | 3        | 4       | 9       | 9          |

70