



EGU Workshop

on

Marketing, Club Development, Recruiting and Keeping
Members

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Abstracts



From the IGC Pilot Survey to the development of a strategy for growth in gliding: lessons learned at the Country Development working group and how they relate to club development

Alexander Georgas, IGC Country Development working group

In 2009, the IGC Country Development working group performed a worldwide online survey of glider pilots. The aim of the survey was to guide the group's strategy for development of soaring in emerging gliding countries. The main results of the survey focused on the issues concerning glider pilots, their image of their sport and an attempt to better understand what constitutes an advanced versus an emerging gliding nation. This paper will explore how these findings relate to development in the club level, what lessons can be learned from our membership in trying to bring in new members, maintain our existing pilots and develop our sport in an environment which is ever more competitive and challenging. It will also look at how the resulting Country Development group strategy and experience can relate to actual development initiatives at the club level and how the different involved parties, from international groups to local clubs, can work together to bring about results.

From a Glorious Past to a Glorious Future

Claus Nedergard-Jacobsen, Denmark

No doubt that Gliding has a glorious past but, whether there will be glorious future is not for sure any longer given the world-wide decline in number of members. Many solutions have been proposed to counteract this development and to make the sport of gliding blossom and bloom again. However, behind each and every proposal for a solution lies an (often unconscious) perception of what the problem is and what the goals are. We often jump to solutions long before having understood these two issues. Consequently, no one can agree on solutions and everyone gets frustrated. Most of us are technicians and we always ask ourselves the "How" question. But maybe there are other and more important questions to ask before jumping to solutions: "Who", "Where", "What" and most importantly: "Why". This presentation deals with the changes in society and culture that have changed the foundation for our activity and discusses some of the questions to ask rather than the answers.

Gliding is the Answer - But What is the Question?

Claus Nedergard-Jacobsen, Denmark

Gliding used to be the answer to the question: "How can we make flying accessible and affordable to the Common Man". Back in the 30ies flying was a dream as magic and as inaccessible as manned space flight today except for the wealthy and rich. The solution was to abandon the engine, build simple gliders ourselves and organise into clubs run by voluntary labour. It was a cheap alternative to "real flying", i.e. flying powered planes, but it was flying. Up until 1985 gliding has had the privilege of being the only affordable alternative to powered flight. But with the advent of Micro light aircraft, hang gliders, paragliders, simulators, cheap airfares etc. there are now many alternatives. Even though the average work week has been shortened since the 30ies, changes in family patterns and economy have meant that time has become a sparse and costly resource. And why should any sane person choose to fly powerless gliders if he/she can fly powered airplanes for less? We have lost our original justification. But perhaps we can find other ways of justifying our sport but "cheap flight". This presentation will list a number of candidates. If we can find out what justifies our sport today, we will have a much better stronghold for branding and marketing ourselves and it can also be used in an awareness campaign to make our members understand what it is that we have to deliver.

A Wonderful Gliding Day in 2025 - A Workshop Exercise

Claus Nedergard-Jacobsen, Denmark

The Danish philosopher Soeren Kierkegaard once wrote: "Everyone wants improvement but nobody wants change". Everyone who has tried to impose changes on others has experienced the wall of resistance that follows. However, change is a fundamental condition of life and Change Management Skills have become an important tool for management . If we do not adapt to change, we die. It is as simple as that. Many professional consultants are available to help organisations accept the need for change and to help them take ownership of the required actions rather than have them dictated. During Nordic Gliding Meeting 2005 in Denmark we invited a professional Organisation Development Consultant to arrange a 4 hour workshop for the leaders of the Nordic Gliding Associations. This presentation will focus on the particular method she chose (which is but one of many) rather than the results.

The Story of Valde who reinvented Gliding - A Story-Telling exercise

Claus Nedergard-Jacobsen, Denmark

When working with glider pilots to make them propose and take ownership of new approaches it is rare to meet someone capable of "Thinking Outside the Box". We are so constrained by our traditional thinking, more so, the longer we have been in the gliding community. Of Course we love our ways but maybe - just maybe - some of them are obsolete. There are ways, however, to switch off those natural constraints and trick the brain into thinking "Outside the box". One such method is presented that was developed together with a professional Danish Organisation Development Consultant. Basically it is a story telling exercise where the participants are urged to write a story about a young man, who reinvents gliding from scratch in the year 2055, long after all gliding clubs and organisations have ceased to exist. The story can be purely fictional, but by doing it this way the participants will find it legal to think "illegal" thoughts. And maybe - just maybe - somewhere along the way, he/she will stumble across new ways of thinking which could open doors of opportunity already in 2012. Or maybe it will sow that seed which will blossom into a tree in 5 - 10 years time.

Short summary of the situation in The Netherlands

Bart Pelt , Head of Gliding Department, the Netherlands

1. In 2006 the Royal Netherlands Aeronautical Association (KNVvL), developed the IFly! program, in cooperation with sponsor European Pilot Selection & Training (EPST), which is a Dutch based organisation fully equipped to train young professionals to become a commercial airline pilot. The IFly! program offers young people in The Netherlands (80 in total, from 14-19 years old) the possibility to get acquainted to gliding and to learn to fly glider planes for one full year for approximately half of the normal price. In springtime these youngsters must attend a mandatory introduction day at the EPST office in Utrecht where they learn everything about EPST and the IFly! program. Thereafter, the IFly! candidates start their glider training during the rest of the season at one of the glider clubs in The Netherlands, where they have to make at least 30 starts to be eligible for the sponsorship of € 300,- After their first year of gliding the KNVvL hopes that these IFly! candidates will continue their glider training, to become fully licensed glider pilots. And sponsor EPST equally hopes that after several years of gliding the IFly! candidates will start a commercial pilot training at their Academy in Utrecht. So both the KNVvL as well as sponsor EPST might benefit from this IFly! program, which in 2012 enters its seventh consecutive year of successful cooperation.
Results of the iFly! Program as of 2006:
Of the 80 candidates who started the iFly! Program, in 2006 71% continued their gliding career, in 2007 the result was 72%, in 2008 it was 72% again, in 2009 it dropped to 58% and in 2010 59% of the youngsters continued their membership of the gliding club of their choice.
2. Next to this IFly! program, the KNVvL offers people who are interested in gliding the possibility of a reduced membership. This reduced membership gives them the opportunity to start a gliding course for a maximum of one month, during which they are fully insured for third party liability.
3. Most gliding clubs in The Netherlands have developed special programs (exhibitions at schools, fairs etc.) to attract possible new members.

Experiences in Finland on GPL and TMG theory distance learning system over web

Sakari Kuosmanen, Managing Director, The Finnish Air Sports Institute Ltd, Finland

Our distance learning system is based on nationally approved training system for Glider Pilot License (GPL). It requires theory in 9 subjects and about 44 hours class teaching. We have convinced our CAA that with this training method when student is using time with doing his/her tasks/solving setted problems he is "sitting" required time "in classroom". Previously and even now you have to sit at lessons all necessary time.

Our system is based on doing tasks which are questions dealing with problems with topics of 9 subjects. We have at least 5 to 10 questions from every topic.

Our environment is working at Tampere University of Technology. All backups and support is 24/7 – very reliable! For technical question on what operating system it is based I can't give answer- I don't need it because our user interface is very simple.

How can we best work together on development issues – including addressing reducing participation - for the long term good of gliding in Europe?

Pete Stratten and Alison Randle, British Gliding Association

Gliding, our amazing sport, is in decline. Deep down we are all concerned that this decline might be terminal. Ever the eternal optimists, we all believe that we WILL find a way of ensuring that gliding thrives as a sport for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

But how?

How can we, as a group of dedicated professionals and volunteers, work together to ensure a brighter future? How do we best support our individual gliding clubs to ensure they are strong and healthy? For instance, in the UK we've been working on a specific Junior Gliding strategy. It is beginning to make a difference – numbers are holding, rather than falling. We look at other countries and see excellent work going on in other areas, but none of us have all of the answers.

It is time for us to pool our ideas and develop practical tools for countries to use to strengthen gliding clubs, and gliding, across Europe.

Clearly we can't do this in just one hour, but at the end of our hour we need to be able to have a way of moving forward. How will we make decisions about what areas to focus on? How will we carry out research so we understand what is happening? How will we share good work going on at clubs and convert these into tools that can be used elsewhere? How will we work? How will it be funded?

There is a pot of EU funding that may be able to assist us – the '*Leonardo Partnerships (small scale co-operation) Fund*', which supports work of the sort we may be likely to undertake, and also all our EGU member countries – even our non-EU countries!

Please bring your ideas on:

- How you think a group could work together to make a practical difference

And in case we decide to apply for Leonardo funding:

- Dates in Autumn 2012 when we could hold the preparatory meeting (and where)
- Details of the Leonardo Fund agency in your country and how to apply for funding for the preparatory visit. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc1208_en.htm