

mpdale · Apr 3, 2024

# How a 'Community Development Manager' can galvanise your squash venue



When we speak to the passionate people who drive and grow our sport every day at squash facilities across the world, one word that comes up often is 'community'.

Squash clubs with thriving communities are successful squash clubs - regardless of the standard or age of players or how many trophies are in their cabinet. Sweaty, smiling squash players who have fun, meet and make friends and come back for more are the lifeblood of every successful squash venue.

But these communities seldom grow organically. We see many examples on the Squash Facilities Network of how good ideas and clever innovations help knit people together and form bonds that will never be broken - boosting participation and player retention and making their clubs sustainable and financially successful.

That's why the Squash Facilities Network wants to spread this good practice by advocating for what we're calling 'Community Development Managers'.

This role does not need to be filled by a qualified squash coach. It's for the person who's a natural leader, gregarious, fun-loving, a good organiser... one of those people who is the life and soul of the party. You probably know exactly the type of person we mean. Maybe it's you.



The Community Development Manager essentially brings people together to have fun while playing squash.

They increase players' motivation to play more squash by giving them more opportunities to play and develop their skills (through mix-in competitions, box leagues and tournaments which are inclusive for all), but also by fusing social connections and creating a thriving community - a 'second home' - that keeps people coming back for more.

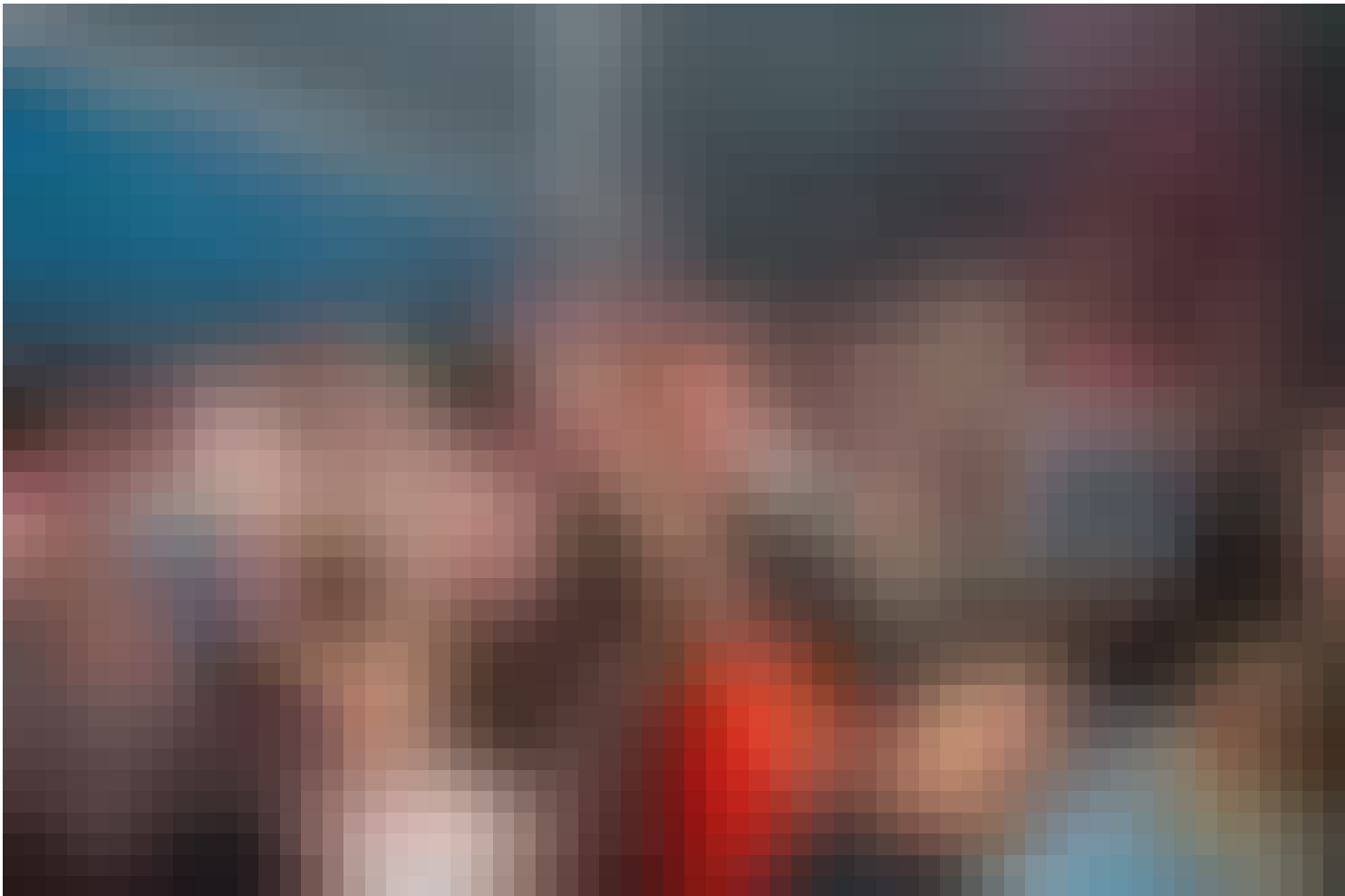
A few examples:

Ed Dunne at West Wood Club in Dublin and Jonathan Gallacher at Padelome in Vienna, have created ingenious regular tournament formats which encourage players of all levels to mix in, compete and socialise.

Kym Patte at Daisy Hill in Brisbane is in charge of welcoming new people who walk through the door, showing them round, integrating them with existing members and weaving them into the venue's community.

Kaifu Lodge in Hamburg organise a varied programme of social events (including a mini nightclub on a squash court with a DJ booth in front of the tin!).





As Kym at Daisy Hill in Brisbane says: "What we've learned here is that squash is the glue that brings people together. Once people have made connections and had fun, they will come back for that reason."

Ed Dunne in Dublin agrees about the importance of a vibrant community. "When potential new members visit, the first thing we'll do is bring them down to the squash courts. They see atmosphere, camaraderie and fun and it immediately puts a smile on potential new members' faces. It start the tour off in a positive way. They think, 'I must try that!'"

Conny Hasselbach, co-founder of Kaifu Lodge, adds: "At other fitness centres, people go to their class or workout and hardly talk to each other, then they leave. In squash, they have a different attitude. They do it because they like to have this feeling of being in a community all playing the same sport."

SFN

These communities have to be created and nurtured - which is where the Community Development Manager comes in.

©2025 SFN (Squash Facilities Network) / [Privacy Policy](#) / [Accessibility Statement](#)



Whatever the parameters of the job, the Community Development Manager plays the sort of role that can be overlooked by some resident squash coaches. Private lessons and internal competitions are definitely on the list of ingredients, but it's building a community - on and off court - that makes for a successful recipe.