



OPERATING PLAYBOOK · FAN INSIGHT

The Fan Insight **Playbook.**

Why knowing your fan is the commercial asset of the next decade, and how to build the program that builds the relationship. Written from Australian and New Zealand sport.

**The data is the by-product.
The relationship is the point.**

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

An operating manual, not a research brief.

This playbook is built for the people who own the fan relationship at a club: the marketing or commercial lead at a professional or semi-pro organisation, the committee at a community one, and the client-facing teams who help either of them design, sell, and run a fan insight program.

It moves from why (the strategic case for knowing your fan), to what (the listening architecture), to how (the operating cadence, templates, and fixes for the most common fan problems). Each section is self-contained. Lift a template directly, or hand the whole document to a board as a deliverable. Read it in order if you're starting from scratch. Skip to the section you need if you're already running parts of a program.

The playbook is written from Australian and New Zealand sport: clubs, governing bodies, leagues, venues. Where it says member, other markets say season-ticket holder. The principles transfer cleanly to any code and any market, and to festivals, tourism organisations, artists, and any business whose value depends on the depth of its relationship with its audience.

A fan insight program is the operating discipline that turns audience into relationship.

WHO THIS IS FOR

Program owners, marketing leads, commercial directors, membership managers, club committees, agency leads, partnerships managers. Anyone whose role depends on understanding fans well enough to do something useful about them.

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PART ONE

The case for knowing **your fan.**

Why the relationship, not the audience, is the asset of the next decade. And why the discipline of knowing your fans is the highest-leverage commercial investment most clubs can make.

From audience to relationship.

For most of the last twenty years, clubs and rights-holders grew the way the media industry grew. They accumulated audience. More followers, more impressions, more reach. Audience was the asset; the strategy was to make the audience as large as possible and then sell access to it.

That model is breaking. Followers are rented from platforms that change their algorithms quarterly. Impressions are increasingly cheap, contested, and unverifiable. Sponsors who paid for logo eyeballs are starting to ask harder questions about whether anyone actually saw the logo, let alone cared.

What's replacing it is quieter and slower to build but worth far more: the relationship. A known fan, whose preferences you've captured, whose behaviour you've tracked, whose attention you've earned through a direct channel you control. That's the asset of the next decade. The audience was rented. The relationship is owned.

This is a structural shift in how value gets created in fan-driven businesses, not a marketing trend. The clubs and organisations that recognise it early, and build the discipline of knowing their fans, will compound a commercial advantage that latecomers can't easily close.

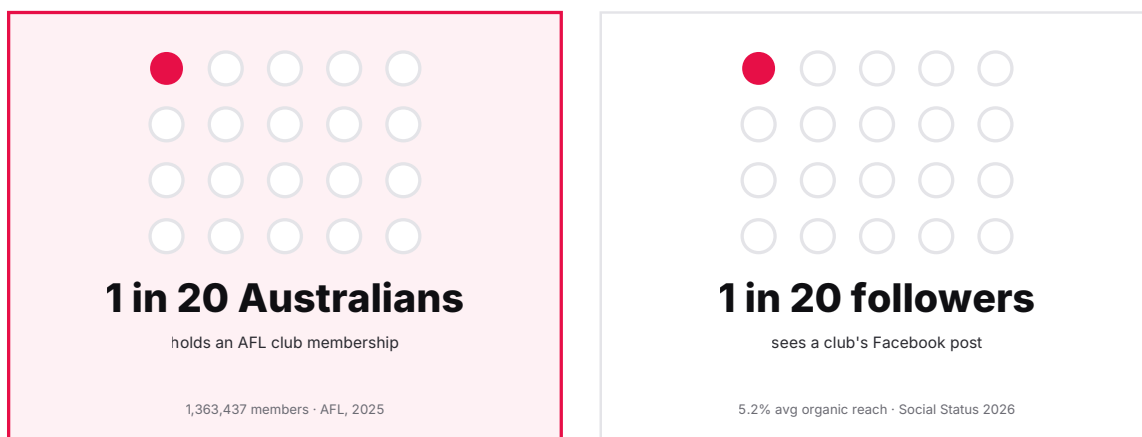
A fan insight program is the operating discipline that turns audience into relationship.

The two one-in-twenties.

Nobody in Australian or New Zealand sport has an audience problem. The AFL's most recent membership announcement recorded 1,363,437 club members, with the league making the point itself: one in 20 Australians now holds a club membership. The 2026 home-and-away season set the all-time attendance record at 7,772,015. The NRL's 2025 season set its own records: 4.98 million through the gates and \$845.6 million in revenue. Underneath the professional game sit roughly 70,000 community clubs and the 2.9 million Australians who volunteer in sport; across the Tasman, more than a million New Zealanders do the same.

The problem is the channel between the club and all of that fandom. Social Status, the Brisbane-based analytics firm, puts average Facebook organic reach at 5.2% across its 2026 monthly benchmarks, January to July. About one in 20 followers sees any given post.

THE TWO ONE-IN-TWENTIES · THE FANDOM AND THE CHANNEL



Same fraction, opposite ends of the argument. The fandom has never been bigger. The channel has never carried less.

Hold those two numbers together and the strategic picture is complete. The audience exists, at record scale, and it keeps turning up. The rented channel most clubs use to reach it delivers one follower in twenty. Everything else in this playbook is about closing that gap with a relationship the club actually owns.

What "knowing your fan" actually means.

Most organisations think they know their fans. The CRM has names, emails, postcodes. Some kind of ticketing history. Maybe a tag for member or season-pass holder. That's holding a record, not knowing a fan.

Knowing a fan means knowing four things, refreshed continuously:

WHO THEY ARE, BEYOND DEMOGRAPHICS

What kind of fan are they? The lifelong loyalist whose engagement doesn't track results? The family attender who comes for the shared experience, not the footy? The digital-only fan you've never seen at the ground? Each of these is a different relationship.

WHAT THEY CARE ABOUT

Across the season, the matchday, the off-season, the merchandise, the content. The signal includes what they bought, what they responded to, what they ignored, and what they asked for and didn't get.

WHERE THEY ARE RIGHT NOW

Engaged or drifting. Loyal or at risk. Growing or fading. A fan you knew a year ago is not necessarily the fan you have today. Relationships move.

WHAT THEY THINK, IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Not inferred from behavioural data. Asked. Listened to. Acted on.

A fan you can describe in those four dimensions is a fan you can serve well: pricing, content, comms, retail, matchday. A fan you can only describe by name and email is a fan you're broadcasting at, hoping something lands.

The economics of the known fan.

The commercial gap between a known fan and an unknown one widens every year.

RETAINED ON PURPOSE

A known fan can be retained on purpose. You know which members are drifting before they don't renew. You know which casuals are converting toward membership. You can intervene early, segment offers, and design comms that match the relationship, not the database.

SOLD TO WITH CONFIDENCE, NOT NOISE

A known fan can be sold to with confidence, not noise. Personalised retail, relevant ticketing, content built around what they actually consume. Less volume, higher conversion, better margin, fewer opt-outs.

PROOF THAT SPONSORS WILL PAY FOR

A known fan is proof that sponsors will pay for. The biggest single shift in the sponsorship market is the move from impressions to interactions. A sponsor who can be shown that a specific known fan saw their activation, tapped on it, redeemed an offer, and came back next month is a sponsor who renews. And pays more. Clubs that can only offer follower counts and logo placements are trading down every year.

COMPOUNDS OVER TIME

A known fan compounds, and the compounding has been measured in this market. In the foundational Australian study of club membership churn, first-year members lapsed at around 30 per cent a year; churn fell with every year of tenure, stabilising near 6 per cent by year five (McDonald, 2010; about 4,570 members across two AFL clubs). Every season a member stays, the relationship gets cheaper to keep. Knowledge is the part of the asset that doesn't depreciate.

The known fan is worth more, costs less to retain, and unlocks revenue lines the unknown fan can't.

Why now is the moment.

Three macro shifts are converging, and together they make this the decade where fan knowledge becomes the decisive commercial variable.

FIRST. THE RENTED-AUDIENCE MODEL IS DEGRADING

Social platforms have always extracted rent, and in 2026 they started itemising the bill. Organic reach on Facebook averages about one in 20 followers. In September Meta launched Meta One, a paid subscription whose business tiers sell "links in organic posts and reels" alongside "deeper audience insights". The two things a club most needs from a platform, a way to send followers somewhere else and a way to see who is listening, are now priced features. Algorithms reward platform-native behaviour, not the brand's, and in Australia one segment of the audience has been removed by law (the next section covers it).

The leagues have already moved. The NRL has pushed NRL ID past four million registered accounts. In August 2026 the NBL and WNBL signed a multi-year partnership to capture first-party data and unify fan profiles; Cricket Australia signed with the same platform in September. New Zealand Rugby launched a new digital hub for fans in June, pointing to the world's biggest sporting organisations that "have built powerful direct relationships with their fans".

SECOND. THE PRIVACY AND IDENTITY LAYER IS COLLAPSING

Third-party cookies, mobile identifiers, cross-site tracking. The infrastructure that supported the "audience as data" model is being dismantled deliberately, by regulators and platform operators. Australia's Privacy Act reform is part of the same tide: a statutory tort for serious invasions of privacy has been live since June 2025, a Children's Online Privacy Code is due by December 2026, and a second tranche of reform is still to come. The only data that survives the transition is data the fan has knowingly given to an organisation they trust. First-party data is the only data that's going to work.

THIRD. SPONSORS HAVE TO PROVE IT, AND MOSTLY CAN'T

The era of accepting a logo-impression report and writing a renewal cheque is closing. In the World Federation of Advertisers' 2025 study of more than 40 brand owners, nearly three-quarters named measuring and demonstrating ROI as a top challenge, while less than 1% of sponsorship budgets typically goes on measurement. Sponsors are being asked for evidence they have almost no budget to produce. The club that can hand over specific, interactive, attributable value becomes the easiest renewal on the list. Clubs that can't will see sponsorship revenue erode quietly, renewal by renewal.

These forces are tidal, not dramatic. Any single quarter looks unchanged. The compound effect over three to five years is decisive, and visible only after it's too late to catch up.

The under-16 line.

On 10 December 2025, the rented-audience problem stopped being a metaphor in Australia.

From that date, platforms designated as age-restricted social media, a list that currently runs to ten and includes Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and YouTube, must take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from holding accounts, with penalties for systemic failure of up to \$49.5 million. Enforcement is real: eSafety's March 2026 compliance update reported more than 4.7 million accounts deactivated in the ban's first days, and by June the government put the total removed, deactivated or restricted above five million. eSafety's own evaluation found the share of under-16s holding a social media account fell from 52.4% to 42.1%. In September 2026 Parliament passed a further amendment to strengthen enforcement, under a bill the government introduced to double the maximum penalty.

10 DEC 2025

Minimum-age obligation takes effect for designated platforms

TEN PLATFORMS

Facebook, Instagram, Threads, TikTok, Snapchat, X, YouTube, Reddit, Kick, Twitch

JUN 2026

5 million+ accounts removed, deactivated or restricted (Government)

SEP 2026

Parliament passes a stronger-enforcement amendment

Think about what that means for a club. The junior fan, the junior player, and a good share of every junior family's attention can no longer be reached on the platforms most clubs treat as their main channel. For that audience the reach isn't throttled; it is legally closed. The obligations sit with the designated platforms, all of them social media services. A club's own app, its email list, its website and game day itself are not on that list, which makes them the only direct lines to the junior side of the base that remain open.

New Zealand's government introduced its own under-16 bill on 24 August 2026. It had not reached a first reading when Parliament rose in September, and two coalition partners have said they will vote against it, so its future rests with the government formed after the November election. A club that builds its junior relationship on owned channels now does not need to wait for that answer.

Social is the invite. Your Digital Clubhouse is where they belong.

The cost of staying unknown.

The damage from not knowing your fan is real but mostly invisible until it isn't.

SLOW CHURN

Fans who stop renewing without a clear cause, attendance that drifts, content engagement that fades. By the time it appears on a P&L, the relationship has been deteriorating for two or three seasons.

SPONSOR ATTRITION

Deals that don't renew, renewals at lower values, sponsors who walk because they couldn't justify the spend internally. The lost revenue is easy to count; the conversations that explain it usually aren't recorded.

GUT-FEEL DECISIONS THAT MISS

The jersey nobody wanted, the price rise that crossed a line, the comms campaign that landed badly. Each of these is recoverable individually. Collectively they erode trust with the people the organisation most needs to keep close.

A FAN BASE THAT DOESN'T FEEL KNOWN

Fans who feel like a database entry behave like one. Transactional, opt-out-prone, switchable. Fans who feel known behave like members of a community. Patient through bad seasons, loud advocates in good ones, willing to pay for things strangers wouldn't.

And the two ledgers move independently. The 2026 AFL season set the all-time home-and-away attendance record; the AFL Fans Association's 2025 survey measured fan satisfaction at 2.7 out of 5, its lowest recorded. Record crowds and record-low satisfaction are coexisting in the same competition right now. The turnstile counts bodies. It doesn't measure the bond.

The cost of not knowing your fan is paid a little every season: in margin that didn't compound, relationships that didn't deepen, and resilience that wasn't built.

Listening is how the relationship gets built.

There's a subtle point that the rest of this playbook depends on, and it's worth stating plainly: **the act of running a serious fan insight program is itself a relationship-building act.**

Fans don't experience being asked, listened to, and responded to as friction. They experience it as respect. Asking a fan what they think, and then visibly doing something about it, sends a signal that almost nothing else in the marketing toolkit can match. It says: you matter individually, your view is worth our time, and we are willing to change because of you.

The gap between what organisations believe about their fans and what fans actually experience is enormous, and it's growing. Medallia's 2026 State of Customer Experience Report surveyed more than 550 CX practitioners and more than 1,500 consumers. The headline finding: **66% of practitioners believe the typical experience of interacting with companies has improved over the past year. Only 17% of consumers agree.** That's a 49-point perception gap, and it's almost surgically aligned to the case in this playbook. Organisations think they know their fans. They don't.

The mechanism for closing that gap is human, not statistical. People give more to organisations that take their input seriously. Done well, a fan insight program is the conversation the organisation is always having with its fans.

66% of organisations believe experience is improving. Only 17% of their customers agree. That gap is what a fan insight program exists to close.

The data is the by-product. The relationship is the point.

PART TWO

The listening architecture.

Four layers, one conversation. The system that turns continuous listening into a coherent picture of who your fans are, what they care about, and where the relationship is right now.

The four hard questions.

Before discussing layers, name the job. A fan insight program exists to answer four questions the business cannot otherwise answer reliably.

FOUR QUESTIONS · EVERY PROGRAM MUST ANSWER

01

Who are our fans, really?

Beyond CRM demographics. What motivates them. Which segments exist. The difference between casual attendee and lifelong member.

02

What do they want from us?

Across the season, the matchday, the off-season, the digital touchpoints, the merchandise, the content.

03

Where are we losing them?

Which moments cause friction. Which segments are at risk of churn. Which complaints recur, season after season.

04

Is what we're doing working?

Did the new app land. Did the price change hurt. Did the jersey launch resonate. Did the campaign earn the response we expected.

If a piece of research doesn't ladder to one of these four, cut it.

Every piece of research described in this playbook should ladder back to one of those four questions. If it doesn't, cut it.

Continuous listening beats annual surveys.

The single most important strategic shift this playbook recommends is moving from annual research to continuous listening. The annual survey still has a role. It's the only realistic way to do deep, like-for-like benchmarking. But it cannot be the centrepiece.

Three reasons:

RECALL DECAY

Asking a fan in December about a game day in May produces unreliable answers. Feedback collected within a day or two of an experience is sharper and more specific.

ACTION LATENCY

A once-a-year insight cycle means fixable problems live for eleven months before they're surfaced. Continuous data lets you act in-season.

ENGAGEMENT

Fans who are asked little and often, on topics that matter to them, respond at higher rates and feel more valued than those hit with one 25-minute survey a year.

The model this playbook uses is a listening architecture: a layered system where annual depth, seasonal pulses, and always-on micro-feedback combine into a single picture. Each layer plays a different role in the relationship.

2.3 · THE ARCHITECTURE

The four layers.

Think of fan insight as four concentric layers, each deepening the relationship in a different way. The slowest layers do the strategic work. The fastest layer catches the operational reality of today.

THE LISTENING ARCHITECTURE · FOUR LAYERS, ONE CONVERSATION

SLOWEST

LAYER 1 · ANNUAL BENCHMARK

The strategic conversation

Once a year. 12 to 18 minutes. Sets the year's agenda and refreshes the segmentation.

1x / year

Board-ready report

LAYER 2 · SEASONAL PULSES

The follow-up

3 to 4 a year. 5 to 7 minutes. Tests what's changed, catches shifts the annual would miss.

3 to 4 / year

Short briefing

LAYER 3 · ALWAYS-ON MICRO-FEEDBACK

The everyday touch

Continuous. 1 to 3 questions, 60 seconds. Catches the immediate, fixable stuff in real time.

continuous

Live dashboard

LAYER 4 · QUALITATIVE DEPTH

The kitchen-table conversation

Quarterly. Fan advisory panel, 90 minutes. The why behind the numbers.

4x / year

Themed reports

FASTEST

Each layer feeds the next. A dip in always-on becomes a question in the next pulse, and a topic in the next panel.

Each layer plays a different role. Together they form a feedback loop, and the loop is where the real value lives.

How the layers work together.

The layers are not independent. They form a feedback loop:

- The annual sets the strategic agenda and identifies the segments worth tracking.
- The pulses test whether interventions are working and surface emerging issues.
- The always-on catches operational problems in real time.
- The qualitative explains the why and generates the next round of hypotheses.

A common failure mode is running each layer in isolation. Different agencies, different platforms, different teams. The whole point of the architecture is that signals from one layer feed the next. A dip in the always-on satisfaction score becomes a question on the next pulse, which becomes a topic in the next focus group, which becomes a recommendation in the annual.

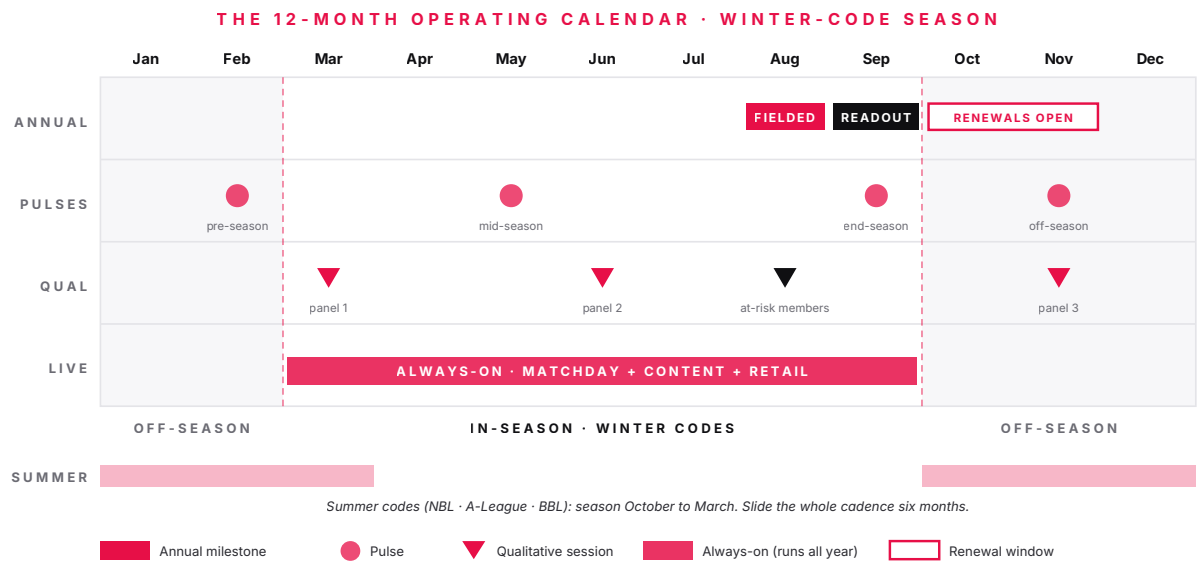
Four layers, one conversation. Conducted at four different speeds.

PRO-TIP · ONE AGENCY, ONE PLATFORM, ONE DASHBOARD

The temptation is to procure each layer from the specialist who's best at it. Resist. The integration cost across four vendors will exceed any quality gain. Pick one partner who can run the whole stack, even if no layer is best-in-class.

A 12-month operating calendar.

A realistic annual calendar for a winter-code club: season March to September, finals into spring, renewals opening straight after. Always-on runs all twelve months in the background; the other three layers cycle around it. Summer codes slide the same cadence six months.



The qualitative panel is the same group of fans across the year. Continuity is what makes their feedback rich.

The annual is fielded six to eight weeks before renewals open, so the readout lands while there is still time to act on it. The pulses follow the season's natural milestones: pre-season excitement, mid-season verdict, end-of-season reflection, off-season anticipation. The at-risk member wave runs 8 to 10 weeks before renewal opens.

PART THREE

Designing each layer.

How to design the annual benchmark, the seasonal pulse, the always-on micro-feedback, and the qualitative panel. What each one is for, what it should ask, and what good looks like.

What to measure once a year.

The annual is where you earn the right to be strategic. It needs to do four things well.

01 · TRACK THE HEADLINE METRICS YEAR-ON-YEAR

- Overall satisfaction (5- or 7-point scale, single question)
- Net Promoter Score: "How likely are you to recommend [Club] to a friend or family member?" 0 to 10 scale
- Renewal intent (for members)
- Brand attribute scoring (15 to 20 attributes: modern, traditional, community-focused, ambitious, accessible, and so on)

02 · REFRESH THE SEGMENTATION

Behavioural and attitudinal as well as demographic. Typical sport segments: lifelong loyalists (emotional commitment, attend regardless of performance); performance followers; family attenders; social attenders; digital-only fans; lapsed; emerging. A good segmentation produces 5 to 8 segments, sized, named, with a one-page persona for each.

03 · DIAGNOSE THE JOURNEY

Score each major touchpoint: ticket purchase, pre-match, at the ground, post-match, app, social, retail, customer service, community work. Identify the gap between importance and satisfaction. The biggest gaps are your priority list for the next 12 months.

04 · SURFACE UNMET NEEDS

Open-text questions on what would make them more likely to attend, watch, spend, recommend. AI-assisted analysis is now reliable enough to do this at volume: a 2026 study in Public Opinion Quarterly found leading models' judgements of open-ended survey answers strongly aligned with human assessments. Use it.

Benchmarks exist for this region. Sport NZ's Voice of Participant survey (2025/26, 24,962 participants across 11 sports; playing members, not spectators) measured 84% likely to rejoin their club, 73% feeling they get value for money, and an NPS of +44. That is what a healthy known-member relationship measures like. Treat numbers well under those as a flag, not a norm.

Keep it tight.

A pulse is not a mini-annual. The discipline is to ask only what's moved or what's new.

A good pulse template has three sections:

- **Tracking core (90 seconds).** Three questions you ask every pulse. NPS, overall satisfaction, one renewal or intent question. This is your trend line.
- **Topical module (3 minutes).** Five to eight questions on whatever the focus of this pulse is. Jersey reaction, coach appointment, ticketing change, app launch.
- **Open verbatim (1 minute).** "What's the one thing we should change?" Always.

Keep the audience consistent across pulses if you can. The same panel of fans, surveyed every three months, gives you cleaner trend data than a fresh sample each time.

PRO-TIP · THE SAME THREE AT THE FRONT, EVERY TIME

Resist the urge to vary the tracking-core questions even slightly. A clean year-on-year and pulse-on-pulse trend line is worth more than the marginal extra question you wanted to slip in. Save the new questions for the topical module.

Pulses are the conversation between the big conversations. Keep them short, focused, and on the thing that's actually changed.

The channels.

This is where the program proves its operational value. The principle is one question, one tap, one fix.

TRIGGERED SURVEY EXAMPLES

- **Post-game email** (sent within 24 hours). "How was your matchday?" Single 5-point scale, plus optional "anything we should know?"
- **Post-purchase email** (retail). "How easy was that?" 1 to 5.
- **Post-app session**. "Did the app do what you needed today?" Yes or no, with follow-up if no.
- **Post-customer-service contact**. "How would you rate your experience with our team?"
- **Ground QR codes** (on seatbacks, at the canteen, in concourses). "Quick question: how's your day at the ground so far?" 1 to 5, with an open box.
- **Polls in the club's app**. Light, fun, frequent. "Pick the player of the match", "Which away jersey do you prefer?", "Which home game are you most excited for?"

DESIGN RULES

- Never more than 3 questions per touchpoint. Survicate's 2025 benchmark of 8,392 surveys found median completion of 100% for a single question and 86.8% for two or three, falling to 77.4% at four to six.
- Any score below the threshold (2 or less out of 5) auto-escalates to the relevant team within 24 hours.
- Suppress repeats. No individual fan asked more than once every 30 days.
- Show the result back to the fan where possible. "92% of fans loved the half-time show. Thanks for telling us."

The fan advisory panel.

The single highest-ROI piece of qualitative research a club can run is a recurring fan advisory panel. Done well, it costs little and produces insight that quantitative work cannot.

It is already happening in this market. The Adelaide Crows are recruiting a 10-person Member Engagement Panel that will "hold regular meetings with the Club's senior management and Board Directors".

HOW TO RUN IT

- Recruit 15 to 20 fans across your key segments. Refresh about 25% per year.
- Mix of in-person (at the ground, ideally pre-game) and online sessions.
- Four sessions a year, each 90 minutes, each with a clear theme.
- Pay them. Club-shop vouchers, exclusive experiences, or a token cash incentive. Their time is worth it.
- A senior club figure attends every session: president, GM or CEO. This is non-negotiable. Insight that doesn't reach decision-makers dies.
- Minutes go to the leadership team within 7 days. Actions assigned. Updates fed back to the panel at the next session.

WHAT TO USE IT FOR

- Stress-testing new ideas before launch (jerseys, ticketing changes, ground upgrades).
- Understanding the why behind quant trends.
- Generating language and emotional texture for marketing.
- Building a small group of fan advocates who feel heard.

PRO-TIP · BRING LEADERSHIP INTO THE ROOM, IN PERSON

An hour with twelve real fans changes a president's view of the database more than any quant report ever will. The panel is the cheapest, fastest way to recalibrate executive instinct against fan reality. Use it.

The four layers at a community club.

The architecture reads like it needs a research department. It doesn't. The same four layers run at volunteer scale, and the constraint that matters is volunteer hours, not budget: in the Australian Sports Foundation's most recent club survey (about 3,000 clubs), 63% named not having enough volunteers as their main challenge.

LAYER 1 Annual	One good end-of-season survey. Twenty questions, one evening to build from the template pack in Part 6, sent to every member and every junior family. Read the results at a committee meeting, pick three actions.
LAYER 2 Pulse	Three moments a season: pre-season, mid-season, season's end. Five questions each. The tracking core stays identical so the trend line survives committee turnover.
LAYER 3 Always-on	The polls and one-tap questions already in the club's app, plus one "how was Saturday?" message after each home game. If it takes more than a minute to answer, it's too long.
LAYER 4 Qualitative	Four kitchen-table conversations a year: one with long-standing members, one with juniors' parents, one with sponsors, one open invitation. A committee member in the room every time, notes on one page.

The output is a short list of things to fix, a trend line the next committee inherits, and a membership base that has watched the club ask and then act. For a club whose app already carries polls, push and post-game one-taps, the always-on layer is already in every member's pocket.

The community version runs on one volunteer hour a week and the channels the club already has.

PART FOUR

The common fan problems, and how to **fix them.**

The eight problems clubs most often surface through fan research, what they sound like in the data, and the responses the evidence base supports.

Which of these do you recognise?

This section pairs the problems clubs most often discover through fan research with the responses the evidence base supports. Each problem is also a relationship problem. The metric is the symptom; the broken relationship is the cause.

EIGHT COMMON FAN PROBLEMS · WHICH OF THESE DO YOU RECOGNISE

01 Beyond a name and an email RELATIONSHIP DAMAGE <i>You can't have a relationship with a record.</i>	02 Averages hide unhappy fans RELATIONSHIP DAMAGE <i>Bimodal scores conceal the people you'll lose.</i>
03 Fans feel priced out RELATIONSHIP DAMAGE <i>Price is a signal about who the club is for.</i>	04 Comms feel like spam RELATIONSHIP DAMAGE <i>Volume without relevance is the opposite of being known.</i>
05 No insight on digital-only fans RELATIONSHIP DAMAGE <i>The most enthusiastic, the least known.</i>	06 A great survey, never used RELATIONSHIP DAMAGE <i>Worse than not asking at all.</i>
07 Can't predict who'll lapse RELATIONSHIP DAMAGE <i>Drift you find out about at renewal time.</i>	08 Leadership doesn't trust the data RELATIONSHIP DAMAGE <i>Fan voice never reaches the decision room.</i>

The metric is the symptom. The broken relationship is the cause.

Treat it as a starting menu. Not every fix applies to every club, but the diagnostic questions are universal. The detail of each problem follows, with a line under each on how the same problem sounds at community scale.

The unknown fan, the unhappy fan.

PROBLEM 01

"We don't know who our fans are beyond a name and an email."

Relationship damage. You can't have a relationship with a record. Generic communications are the inevitable output of generic knowledge, and they're how fans learn the club doesn't really see them.

At a community club: the rego list is the database, and nobody has asked the members anything since the uniform vote.

What it sounds like in research: Generic communications, broad satisfaction scores, low engagement on personalised offers, no behavioural variation in campaign response.

Fix:

- Build a behavioural and attitudinal segmentation from the annual.
- Map every segment to the operational systems: ticketing, CRM, app, retail.
- Tag every fan into a primary segment and update annually.

PROBLEM 02

"Our matchday scores are good overall but a quiet group of fans are unhappy."

Relationship damage. Averages hide the people you're losing. A bimodal distribution means one cohort is having a different relationship with the club than the rest, and that cohort is the most likely to leave.

At a community club: the vocal happy families at presentation night, and the quiet ones who don't re-register.

What it sounds like in research: A bimodal satisfaction distribution. High average, but a long tail of detractors, usually concentrated in a specific stand, fan type, or fixture situation.

Fix:

- Drill the always-on data by stand, start time, fixture type. The pattern is almost always there.
- Run a targeted qualitative session with the unhappy segment.
- Start with the basics. Deloitte's stadium experience research (15,000+ US fans across seven leagues) finds food-and-drink value for money among the lowest satisfaction scores in the whole data set, even where the headline experience scores well. Fix the operational root cause; the score follows.

The priced-out fan, the spammed fan.

PROBLEM 03

"Fans say they feel priced out."

Relationship damage. Price tells fans who the club is for. Each time a fan feels priced out, they hear that the relationship is conditional.

At a community club: fees, boots, petrol. The cost conversation is happening in the car park either way.

What it sounds like in research: Cost is a measured barrier in this market. The AFL Fans Association's 2024 survey (4,155 fans) found about one in five planning to attend fewer games because of cost of living; its 2025 wave repeated the finding, with 7% downgrading memberships and 4% cancelling. ING/YouGov (2025, 1,002 fans) put the all-in cost of attending a live game at \$408 a person. And the cost starts before the gate: the Australian Sports Commission's 2026 Cost of Sport study put the average entry-level cost of playing at \$1,161 for a child and \$1,200 for an adult.

Fix:

- Don't try to argue the price down. Accept the perception.
- Audit the value side of the equation. The value side moves the number: when the Atlanta Falcons halved food prices, overall in-stadium spend rose 16% (Deloitte).
- Test bundles in the next pulse: family bundles, kids-go-free fixtures, junior memberships, flexi and three-game memberships, payment plans.
- Be transparent about cost drivers. Fans tolerate price rises they understand far better than ones they don't.

PROBLEM 04

"Our communications feel like spam to fans."

Relationship damage. Volume without relevance is the opposite of being known. Every irrelevant email is a small piece of evidence that the club isn't paying attention.

At a community club: every message to every member, because the group chat is the only channel.

What it sounds like in research: Low open rates, "don't get relevant communication" in open verbatims, opt-out spikes, push-notification disable rates climbing.

Fix:

- Cut volume hard before doing anything else. Less is almost always better.
- Use the segmentation to drive content variation. A digital-only fan interstate does not need ticket reminders.
- Move transactional comms to channels fans actually check: app push for game-day-critical info, email for considered content.
- Run a "comms audit" pulse asking fans which communications they actually want.

The digital-only fan, the wasted survey.

PROBLEM 05

"We have no insight at all on our digital-only fans."

Relationship damage. The digital-only fan is often the most enthusiastic and the least known. Treating them as a residual category, a follower count rather than a person, leaves the deepest fan relationship in the database untended.

At a community club: the past players and distant supporters who'd back the club tomorrow if anyone asked.

What it sounds like in research: Database skewed to ticket-buyers, social engagement strong but uncorrelated with revenue, no clear journey for non-attending fans.

Fix:

- Use the always-on layer to recruit digital-only fans into a research panel, through social, the website, and the app.
- Run a segment-specific module in the annual on motivations, content preferences, and willingness to pay.
- Treat them as a distinct fan type. Their value is different in shape: content, merchandise, sponsor receptivity, amplification.
- Remember the under-16 slice of this audience can no longer hold accounts on the designated platforms at all. For junior fans, the club's own channels are the only direct line.

PROBLEM 06

"We did a great survey two years ago and never used it."

Relationship damage. Asking fans to give you their views and then ignoring them is worse than not asking at all. It signals that their voice doesn't matter, and that's the most expensive signal you can send to a fan base.

At a community club: the survey a committee member ran two AGMs ago. Nobody can find the spreadsheet.

What it sounds like internally: The deck is on a shared drive somewhere. Nobody owns the actions. The next survey is being designed without reference to the last one.

Fix:

- Assign one named owner of the insight program. They don't have to do the research, but they own follow-through.
- Build a simple action tracker: every insight tagged with an action, an owner, and a deadline. Review monthly.
- Adopt a "You Said, We Did" cadence. Quarterly comms to fans showing what's changed because of what they told you.

The lapsing member, the doubtful boardroom.

PROBLEM 07

"We don't know which members are about to lapse."

Relationship damage. The lapsing member is a relationship the club has lost without realising. By the time the renewal goes unanswered, the drift has been happening for two or three seasons.

At a community club: you find out at rego time, when the family just doesn't come back.

What it sounds like in research: Renewal rates are flat or declining and you can't predict who'll go. Reactive churn. You find out when they don't renew.

Fix:

- Build a churn model from data you already have: attendance frequency, time-since-last-purchase, app activity, service contacts, NPS. The Australian evidence says this works; the next page carries it.
- Watch the measured predictors: tenure, distance from the ground, and late-season attendance. New members who attend little are around five times more likely to lapse than long-tenured frequent attenders (McDonald, 2010).
- Run a dedicated at-risk member qualitative wave 8 to 10 weeks before renewal opens. Talk to 20 to 30 fans the model flags.
- Build a tiered intervention: proactive outreach for highest-risk, segmented offers for medium, business-as-usual for low. Track the win-back rate as a program KPI.

PROBLEM 08

"Leadership doesn't trust the data."

Relationship damage. When leadership doesn't trust the data, fan voice doesn't make it into the room where decisions are made. The relationship is run on executive instinct, and instinct is wrong far more often than it admits.

At a community club: "the members will hate it" settles arguments no one has actually tested.

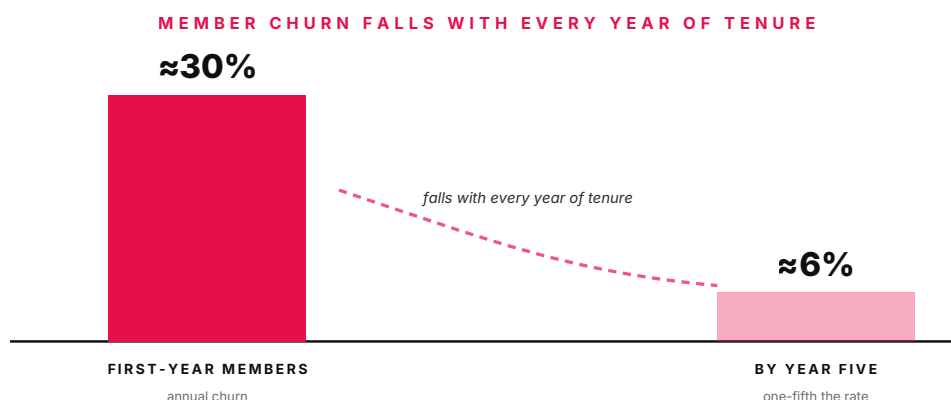
What it sounds like internally: Insights get challenged in meetings, sample sizes get questioned, single anecdotes override patterns.

Fix:

- Be transparent about methodology in every readout: sample, weighting, who you spoke to, what you didn't ask.
- Pair every quant insight with a fan quote. Numbers convince analysts; quotes convince boards.
- Bring leadership into the qualitative once a year. Direct exposure changes how the numbers get read afterwards.
- Set a small number of headline metrics and report them every month, in the same format. Consistency builds trust.

Churn is predictable. Tenure compounds.

Problem 07 is the one place where the Australian evidence base is deep enough to lean on hard, so lean on it.



McDonald (2010): about 4,570 members across two AFL clubs. New, low-attending members churn at over five times the rate of long-tenured frequent attendees.

AUC 0.901

CHURN IS PREDICTABLE

118,469 season-membership renewal decisions at one Australian club across six seasons, modelled with machine learning. Yeomans et al. (2026), *Sport Management Review*. Full citation in Appendix C.

The same study names the strongest predictors, and none of them needs a data scientist to collect:

PREDICTOR 1

Tenure

PREDICTOR 2

Driving distance from the ground

PREDICTOR 3

Late-season attendance

A club that tracks who is new, who lives far away, and who stopped coming in August already has the bones of a churn model. The sophistication can come later. The discipline of looking is what changes the renewal number, because it converts churn from a result you discover into a risk you manage.

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PART FIVE

Operating the **program.**

Ownership, action tracking, closing the loop, KPIs, and the tools you need underneath it all. The mechanics that separate programs that produce reports from programs that produce relationships.

Who owns what.

A fan insight program needs clear ownership across three levels:

- **Program owner (one named person).** Owns the strategy, the calendar, the budget, and the action tracker. Often sits in marketing, membership, or strategy; at a community club, a named committee member.
- **Layer leads.** One owner per layer: annual, pulse, always-on, qualitative. Could be the same person for smaller clubs.
- **Action owners.** Whichever team is responsible for the fix. Ops for game day, ticketing for renewals, retail for merchandise, comms for messaging.

The program owner is not the action owner. Their job is to surface, synthesise, and route. The action sits with the team that can do something about it.

5.2 The action tracker

Every meaningful insight should land in a single, simple tracker, reviewed monthly by the program owner with action owners. Anything overdue gets escalated.

Insight	Source	Segment	Action	Owner	Status
Canteen queues at gate 4 driving low matchday scores for family zone	Always-on plus Q3 panel	Family attenders	Add 2 mobile vendors	Ops	In progress

PRO-TIP · ONE TRACKER, ONE MEETING, ONE OWNER

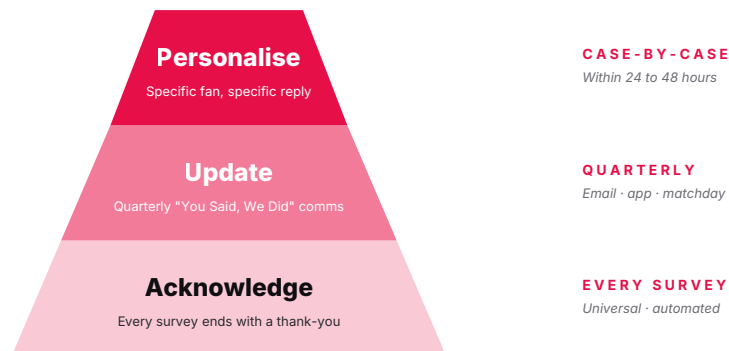
The instinct is to build a sophisticated dashboard and a multi-stakeholder governance forum. Don't. One spreadsheet, reviewed monthly by the program owner with action owners, beats a fancy system that nobody opens.

Closing the loop with fans.

This is the practice that separates programs that work from programs that don't. It is also the single most important relationship behaviour in the whole playbook.

Every input creates an obligation to acknowledge, and where possible, to feed back. Skip this step and the program produces data without trust. Get it right and the data layer becomes a relationship layer.

THE CLOSE-THE-LOOP DISCIPLINE · ACKNOWLEDGE · UPDATE · PERSONALISE



The single highest-ROI behaviour in the entire program.

30 to 40%

THE ACTION GAP

30 to 40 per cent of departments that receive CX insights take no action on them. Medallia, 2026 State of Customer Experience Report.

The action gap is the inverse proof point. Most insight programs already collect enough data; what they lack is the discipline of acting on it visibly. The behaviour is cheap to build. The dividend compounds.

Measure the program itself.

The program should be measured. A short scorecard, with targets as working recommendations to tune to your base:

KPI	Target	Why it matters
Annual response rate	15%+ of database	Health of relationship with fans
Pulse response rate	25%+ of invited panel	Engagement of the listening panel
Always-on weekly volume	Steady, season-scaled	Operational signal density
Issues acted on within 30 days	80%+	Program is converting to action
"You Said, We Did" cadence	Quarterly minimum	Closing the loop is happening
Fan-facing NPS	Up year-on-year	Ultimate proof point
Renewal rate	Up year-on-year in tracked segments	Commercial proof point

5.5 Tools and tech

At professional scale: a survey platform capable of triggered, in-app, and email surveys (Qualtrics, Medallia, Survicate; Forsta now sits inside Qualtrics after the 2026 acquisition); a CRM the survey platform can write back to, so every response enriches the fan record; a dashboard layer (Looker, Power BI, Tableau); open-text analysis (Thematic, or the AI built into modern survey tools); and a panel tool for the qualitative side (Recollective, or Discuss, which now incorporates Voxco; a private WhatsApp group works at smaller scale).

At community scale: the club's own app for polls, push and post-game one-taps; a free form tool for the annual and the pulses; a spreadsheet for the action tracker.

The tooling is the easy part. The program owner, the calendar, and the action tracker are what make it work.

PART SIX

Templates.

Lift-ready survey openers, pulse cores, post-game flows, recruitment asks, and the quarterly “You Said, We Did” cadence. Edit lightly, deploy quickly.

Opening section template.

ANNUAL BENCHMARK · OPENER

Thanks for taking part. This survey will take about 12 minutes. Your answers go straight to the team and will shape what we do next season.

We'll share back what we've learned and what we're going to do about it.

Q1. Overall, how satisfied are you with [Club] this season? *(1 to 7)*

Q2. How likely are you to recommend [Club] to a friend or family member? *(0 to 10)*

Q3. Compared to last season, would you say your overall experience as a [Club] fan has got significantly better, slightly better, stayed the same, slightly worse, or significantly worse?

6.2 Pulse · three-question core

SEASONAL PULSE · CORE QUESTIONS

Q1. *(NPS)* How likely are you to recommend [Club] to a friend or family member? *(0 to 10)*

Q2. *(Tracking)* Thinking about the last [period], how would you rate your overall experience as a fan? *(1 to 5)*

Q3. *(Open)* What's the one thing you'd most like us to change?

6.3 Always-on · post-game template

ALWAYS-ON · POST-GAME MESSAGE

(Sent within 24 hours)

Hi [Name]. Thanks for being there yesterday.

One question: how was your matchday? *(1 to 5 scale)*

(If 4 or 5). Anything that made it great? *(optional open box)*

(If 1 to 3). Sorry to hear that. What let you down? *(optional open box, plus tickbox list of common issues)*

Your reply goes straight to our supporter experience team.

Fan advisory panel · recruitment ask.

FAN ADVISORY PANEL · RECRUITMENT ASK

We're looking for a small group of fans to help shape what [Club] does next.

If you're up for it, you'd join a group of 15 to 20 fans who meet four times a year. You'd give us your honest views on things like game day, ticketing, the app, and what we're doing on and off the field. We'd listen, act, and tell you what we did.

It's a real seat at the table. Club leadership will be in the room with you. We'll cover your costs and give you a small thank-you for your time.

Interested? Tell us a bit about yourself: [\[link\]](#)

6.5 "You Said, We Did" · quarterly comms template

QUARTERLY CLOSE-THE-LOOP COMMS

You said. We did.

Every quarter we share what fans have told us, and what we're doing about it.

You said: the queue at the [grandstand] canteen was too slow.

We did: added two mobile vendors and brought in card-only lanes. Average wait dropped from 12 minutes to 4 last month.

You said: game-day comms come too late.

We did: game-day messages now go out 48 hours before the first bounce, with everything you need in one place.

You said: away tickets for kids felt steep.

We did: introduced a \$10 junior away ticket from next month.

Keep telling us. We're listening.

The background of the entire page is a dark maroon color. It features a series of concentric circles of varying radii, centered towards the right side of the frame. Scattered across the page are numerous small dots of the same maroon color, some of which are positioned on the concentric circles, creating a starry or orbital effect.

PART SEVEN

Building the pitch.

The conversation arc for selling the program. To a board, to a committee, or to a client. Five steps from diagnosis to commitment, designed to land on action, not approval.

The five-step arc.

When walking a client, a board, or your own leadership team through this, the conversation should follow this arc. The first three steps establish the case. The last two close it.

01 · DIAGNOSE THE RELATIONSHIP

Don't open with what data they collect. Open with the deeper question: what kind of relationship does the organisation currently have with its fans, and is it the one it wants? Most clubs land in one of three places:

- **No real relationship beyond the transaction.** The club knows fans as ticket-buyers and email addresses. The relationship lives almost entirely on platforms the club doesn't own.
- **A relationship at the surface.** Fragmented surveys, occasional listening, no single view of the fan, no follow-through. The intent is there; the discipline isn't.
- **A maturing relationship.** A program exists, but the action tracker is patchy and close-the-loop is weak. The club is asking but not yet visibly answering.

The diagnosis is a strategic frame, not a survey scorecard.

02 · SHOW THEM THE GAP

Use the eight problems in Part 4 as a checklist. Ask which they recognise. Most will recognise four or five. That's the conversation starter. The problems are relationship issues, not research issues. Frame them that way.

03 · PROPOSE THE ARCHITECTURE (IN PHASES)

Not all four layers at once. Recommend a phased rollout:

- **Phase 1 (months 1 to 3).** Annual benchmark, always-on post-game survey, action tracker.
- **Phase 2 (months 4 to 9).** Add seasonal pulses and the fan advisory panel.
- **Phase 3 (months 10 to 12).** Add segmentation refresh, churn model, full close-the-loop cadence.

Evidence, and the close.

Steps 01 to 03 establish the case for doing the program. Steps 04 and 05 are where the client either signs up to do it properly, or doesn't.

04 · SET EXPECTATIONS ON EVIDENCE, NOT PROJECTIONS

The temptation is to promise an NPS uplift. Resist it; invented forecasts are how programs lose boards. What the evidence supports saying:

- **Churn is predictable before it happens.** 118,469 renewal decisions at one Australian club, modelled to AUC 0.901 (Yeomans et al., 2026).
- **Tenure compounds.** First-year member churn near 30% falls to about 6% by year five (McDonald, 2010). Keeping a member one more season changes their whole curve.
- **The perception gap is real.** 66% of organisations think experience improved; 17% of customers agree (Medallia, 2026). Assume the club is on the wrong side of it until measured.

Year one's wins are operational and counted, not projected: issues found and fixed, at-risk members contacted before renewal, "You Said, We Did" cycles shipped. Count them and report them.

05 · CLOSE ON COMMITMENT

The program only works with three things in place: a named owner, leadership attendance at the qualitative panel, and a monthly action review. If the client can't commit to those three, the program will fail. Better to find out at sign-off than at month nine.

Plenty of clubs say yes to the research budget. Far fewer say yes to the owner, the panel, and the monthly review. The yes that matters is the second one.

The committee conversation.

At a community or semi-pro club nobody buys a research program; somebody proposes one at committee. The same five steps compress into one agenda item.

The diagnosis is a conversation, not an audit. "What do we actually know about our members beyond the rego list?" is usually enough to make the case by itself.

The gap is Part 4 read aloud. Put the eight problems in front of the committee and ask which ones sound like this club. The car-park versions are under each card.

The architecture is the community version. One end-of-season survey, three pulses, the app's polls and post-game one-taps, four kitchen-table conversations. Section 3.5 is the page to table.

Expectations are the honest ones. No projected percentages. The first season's wins are things fixed, families kept, and a trend line the next committee inherits.

Commitment is one named owner and ten minutes a month. A standing agenda item, the action list read out, the "You Said, We Did" note in the newsletter each quarter. The budget conversation is usually the easy one, because the community version runs on channels the club already has.

PRO-TIP · MAKE THE FIRST WIN VISIBLE FAST

Pick one fixable irritation from the first survey, fix it inside a month, and tell everyone it came from the survey. The second survey's response rate is built by what the club visibly did with the first.

The cheat sheet.

A quick-reference table for matching the question to the right layer and cadence.

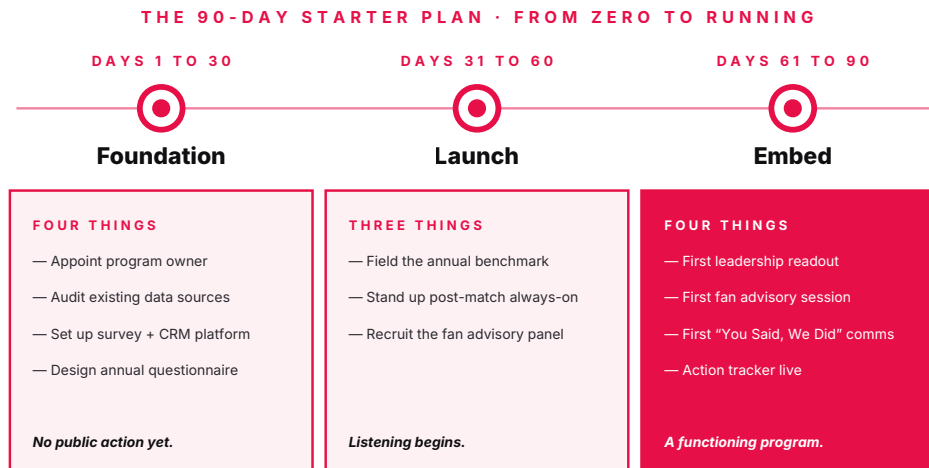
If the question is...	The right layer is...	The right cadence is...
Strategic, year-on-year benchmarking	Annual	Once per year
"Is the new [thing] working?"	Pulse	3 to 4 times per year
Operational, real-time game-day issue	Always-on	Continuous
"Why is this happening?"	Qualitative	Quarterly
Single at-risk segment (e.g. lapsed members)	Targeted qual plus behavioural data	Annual deep-dive

PRO-TIP · PRINT THIS AND STICK IT ON THE WALL

Most programs drift because someone in the team reaches for the wrong layer. The annual gets used to answer an operational question; the always-on gets used to do a strategic benchmark. Five seconds with this table prevents most of those mistakes.

A 90-day starter plan.

For a club that has nothing today and wants to start small.



After 90 days, you have a working operating discipline. Layers and sophistication build from there.

After 90 days, you have a functioning program. Layers and sophistication build from there. The point of the 90 days is to be live, and to be visibly listening.

Sources cited.

AUSTRALIA'S SOCIAL MEDIA MINIMUM AGE (2025 TO 2026)

Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024, with obligations in force from 10 December 2025 under the Online Safety Act 2021 and the Online Safety (Age-Restricted Social Media Platforms) Rules 2025. Ten platforms designated as of August 2026: Facebook, Instagram, Threads, TikTok, Snapchat, X, YouTube, Reddit, Kick, Twitch. Maximum civil penalty \$49.5m. Deactivation figure (4.7 million+ accounts in the ban's first days) from the eSafety Commissioner's March 2026 compliance update. "More than 5 million under-16s accounts removed, deactivated or restricted" and the proposal to raise the penalty "from \$49.5 million to \$99 million": Prime Minister's release, 28 June 2026. Online Safety Amendment (Strengthening Enforcement for the Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2026: House agreed to the Senate message on 10 September 2026; the penalty as enacted is not cited here. Account-holding fall from 52.4% to 42.1%: eSafety evaluation, July 2026. New Zealand: Online Safety (Minimum Age and Child Safety Risk Assessment) Bill, introduced 24 August 2026; no first reading before Parliament rose on 24 September 2026.

SOCIAL STATUS (2026)

Facebook Organic Reach Rate monthly benchmark. The 5.2% figure is the mean of the January to July 2026 monthly figures; August and September read 5.04% and 4.16% (4 October 2026); method is organic reach divided by page followers, computed across the pages indexed by Social Status, a Brisbane-based analytics firm. The sample skews toward actively managed pages, so a volunteer-run club page likely sits below it.

AFL (2025, 2026)

Club membership record of 1,363,437, announced 22 August 2025, with the league noting one in 20 Australians holds a club membership; 2025 season attendance of 8,253,649 in the 2025 AFL Financial Result (November 2025); all-time home-and-away attendance record of 7,772,015, announced August 2026.

NRL / AUSTRALIAN RUGBY LEAGUE COMMISSION (2025, 2026)

Record 2025 season results announced 23 February 2026: total attendance of 4.98 million and revenue of \$845.6m. NRL ID reported past four million registered accounts (NRL, October 2025).

MCDONALD (2010)

McDonald, H., "The Factors Influencing Churn Rates Among Season Ticket Holders: An Empirical Analysis", *Journal of Sport Management*, 24(6), 676 to 701. About 4,570 season-ticket holders across two AFL clubs. Findings cited: churn rates often exceed 20%; new, low-attending members over five times more likely to churn than long-term frequent attendees; churn falls with each year of tenure, stabilising near 6% from year five against first-year rates near 30%.

Sources cited.

YEOMANS, PURSER, KARG, NGUYEN AND SHORTER (2026)

"Machine learning and churn: predicting season ticket holder behaviour", *Sport Management Review*, 29(4), 707 to 733. 118,469 subscriber renewal decisions at one Australian professional club across six seasons. Best model AUC-ROC 0.901; strongest predictors tenure, driving distance, and late-season attendance.

MEDALLIA (2026)

The 2026 State of Customer Experience Report, released 5 March 2026, based on surveys of more than 550 CX practitioners and more than 1,500 consumers plus benchmarks from 600+ anonymised Medallia customer programs. Findings cited: 66% of practitioners believe experience has improved over the past year while 17% of consumers agree; 30 to 40 per cent of departments that receive CX insights take no action on them.

DELOITTE (2024 PUBLICATION)

"The Stadium Experience: Keeping sports fans engaged—and loyal", Deloitte. More than 15,000 US sports fans across seven leagues (MLB, MLS, NASCAR, NBA, NFL, NHL, WNBA); the survey series began in 2018. Findings cited: food-and-drink value ranks among the lowest satisfaction scores in the data set; the Atlanta Falcons' 50% concession price cut was followed by a 16% rise in overall in-stadium fan spend.

AFL FANS ASSOCIATION (2024, 2025)

National fan surveys run by the independent AFL Fans Association. 2024 wave: 4,155 fans; about one in five planning to attend fewer games due to cost of living. 2025 wave: overall fan satisfaction 2.7 out of 5, its lowest recorded; one in five planning fewer games; 7% downgraded memberships; 4% cancelled. The 2025 wave's sample size was not disclosed at time of writing; treat its figures as the association reports them.

ING / YOUNG & RUBICAM (2025)

Survey of 1,002 Australian sports fans aged 18+, fielded 6 to 10 March 2025 by YouGov, weighted to ABS population data. Findings cited: attending a live game costs \$408 per person on average, all-in; Australian fans spend more than \$19 billion a year on their fandom.

LISTENING METHOD (2026)

Survicate, Survey Completion Rate Benchmarks, 9 June 2026 (8,392 surveys, 1,087 organisations). DiGiuseppe and Flynn, Public Opinion Quarterly 90(3), March 2026 (1,400 respondents). Adelaide Football Club, Member Engagement Panel nominations, 2026.

Sources cited.

SPORT NEW ZEALAND

Voice of Participant 2025/26, published 11 August 2026: 24,962 participants across 11 sports (playing members, not spectators). Findings cited: 84% likely to rejoin their club; 73% feel they get value for money; NPS of +44. Volunteering: more than one million New Zealanders volunteered to support sport and recreation in 2024 (Sport NZ).

AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION

2.9 million Australians volunteer in sport each year (AusPlay 2023; AusPlay surveys about 40,000 Australians annually). Cost of Sport study, conducted by Federation University for the ASC, released 31 August 2026: average entry-level cost (registration or membership, uniform, equipment) of \$1,161 for children and \$1,200 for adults.

AUSTRALIAN SPORTS FOUNDATION (2023)

Clubs Under Pressure, May 2023, drawing on responses from about 3,000 community clubs: 63% named not having enough volunteers as their main challenge; 18% described themselves as at risk of collapse. The commonly used count of roughly 70,000 community sports clubs in Australia is the ASF's own figure.

AUSTRALIAN PRIVACY ACT REFORM (2024 TO 2026)

Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024: statutory tort for serious invasions of privacy in force from June 2025; Children's Online Privacy Code to be registered by 10 December 2026; automated-decision-making transparency requirements from December 2026. Second-tranche exposure draft released for consultation 31 August 2026; not yet introduced as of October 2026.

PLATFORMS, LEAGUES AND SPONSORS (2025 TO 2026)

Meta, "Introducing Meta One", 15 September 2026 (Advanced plan from US\$49.99 a month). NBL Group and Komo, multi-year partnership (Ministry of Sport, 13 August 2026). Cricket Australia and Komo (ChannelLife, 9 September 2026). New Zealand Rugby digital hub; NZR+ "attracted nearly 450,000 registered fans globally" (StopPress, 17 June 2026). World Federation of Advertisers, Global Sponsorships and Partnerships, 17 December 2025: more than 40 brand owners, over \$8.2 billion in sponsorship investment.



ABOUT TIPARRA

The relationship is the **point**.

Tiparra is a white-label fan engagement platform. Clubs use it to give their fans a branded app of their own, the clubhouse the relationship lives in, with the listening, content and commercial tooling running underneath. It's used by organisations from Super Rugby to community football across Australia and New Zealand.

The Fan Insight Playbook is the operating manual for the relationship layer that sits underneath the app. The always-on listening, the pulse architecture, the close-the-loop discipline, the action tracker. These are the mechanics that turn an audience into something measurable and renewable.

The data is the by-product. The relationship is the point.

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS GUIDE

Share it with the team that owns fan strategy. Take the eight-problems checklist on page 26 into your next leadership or committee meeting. Run the 90-day starter plan and be visibly listening by the end of the quarter.

START THE CONVERSATION

tiparra.com

Your app. Your channel. Your rules.