



Becoming a Benefits-Driven Organization

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We began our series on the benefits of recreation and how your organization can become benefits-driven, in the January issue of Recreation Saskatchewan.

How can your organization become benefits-driven? By first formally recognizing and acknowledging the need for action, you and your organization can build benefits into your policy, mission, vision statements and outcomes. The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association has accessed the best research available about what people can do in the fields of recreation, parks, sports, fitness, arts and culture to focus their recreation planning on outcomes or end results.

Your organization can become benefits driven by promoting eight key marketing messages to communicate the benefits of recreation to individuals, families, and communities. In the last issue of Recreation Saskatchewan, we briefly covered the first key benefit message that stated recreation and active living are essential to personal health - a key determinant of health status.

To further expand on this key benefit message, your organization can integrate the following messages into your own marketing and communications activities, and place them on promotional materials:

- Recreation and active living helps people live longer - adding up to two years to life expectancy;
- Recreation and active living prolongs independent living for seniors by compressing the disease and impairment period typically associated with aging - keeping seniors vital and involved in community life;
- Recreation, fitness, sports, active living significantly reduces the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke - the leading cause of death in Canada.
- Recreation, fitness, sports, and active living combats osteoporosis - affecting 25% of postmenopausal women;
- Recreation, fitness, sports, and active living combats diabetes - the fourth ranking killer disease (after heart disease, cancer, and respiratory disease);
- Recreation, fitness, sports, and active living has been shown to

help in preventing site specific cancers - particularly in the colon, breast and lungs;

- Recreation, fitness, sports, and active living help prevent and rehabilitate back problems - affecting 25% of adults;
- Recreation, fitness, sports, active living, parks, and arts/culture all contribute to mental health - reducing stress, reducing depressing, and contribution to emotional/psychological well-being;
- Recreation, fitness, sports, and active living, parks, and arts/culture all enhance overall health and well-being - critical to personal quality of life;
- Recreation is a proven therapeutic tool utilized in hospitals, clinics, and communities everywhere (physical recreation, sports, arts/culture) - helping restore physical, mental, and social capabilities and abilities.

Your organization's marketing and communications efforts will be enhanced by incorporating messages about the benefits of recreation into the planning of recreation and parks programs and services. You will also build in awareness of the important personal, social, economic and environmental benefits that well designed services can deliver.

Here are two ways your organization can start to become a benefits messenger:

- Purchase a copy of "Catalogue of Benefits" and share it with volunteers, staff, and members and partners of your organization.
- Purchase copies of the "Catalogue of Benefits" and strategically place copies within key areas of your community.



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