

## Sports Geek Nation AMA with Liam Murphy

Liam Murphy knows much about numbers and rhythms. He started a career in financing planning in various industries such as Westpac that eventually led him to sports coaching and is now the Chief Executive Officer of Calisthenics Victoria.

Calisthenics is a sport in Australia that combines gymnastics, dance and theatre with performing at its heart.

Connect with Liam Murphy on [LinkedIn](#), Twitter [@LJMurphy06](#) and Slack [@Liam Murphy](#)  
Find out more about Calisthenics Victoria at <http://calisthenics.asn.au>

Here's the full transcript:

Links to names will link you into Slack community, if you are not a member [please sign up here](#).

**Q. [Sean Callanan](#):** I'll start [@Liam Murphy](#) I've mentioned you are new to sports, can you please give us some background to how (and why) you broke into sports business especially doing so as a CEO

**A. [Liam Murphy](#):** Hi [@seancallanan](#) thank you for the question and the ability to be involved in the AMA initiative.

My move into sports business is a little different to most. I started my working life as in commerce working through the financial services industry, working in a variety on organisations from the big four banks in Australia to independent firms. That being said, my passion has been in sports. So about 12 months ago I started the process of upskilling myself, developing relationships in the sports industry in Australia with the intention to combine my passion with my education and work experience.

The opportunity to work at Calisthenics Victoria Inc came up and I couldn't think of a better place to start my sports business journey. The sport itself dates back to 1882 (I love my history) in the goldfield of Victoria and like AFL football is one of Victoria's homegrown sports. The outgoing CEO Matthew Brown had done a great job in his time in the role and I was excited by the opportunities the sport presents.

**Q. [Andrew Walton](#):** Hello Liam, how do you see digital activity ahead useful to the growth of a sport like Calisthenics that has limited exposure historically?

**A. [Liam Murphy](#):** Hi [@andrewwaltonx](#) there was a substantial change in the environment from the financial service industry to an environment like calisthenics where the large majority of the membership is female.

As Calisthenics is a smaller sport when compared with the major sports in Victoria we've spent our energies mobilising our digital followers (15k across Instagram and Facebook). One of the key things we will be looking to do over the next 4 years will be to increase our exposure to the general public and to do that we will be looking for assistance from disrupters like @weiss09 at my sport live who are making it easier for less resources sports like us to broaden our reach.

**Q. [Tod Caflisch](#):** Hi @Liam Murphy. As a newcomer to the sports industry and in a decision-maker role, what do you see as your top 3 priorities in your first couple years to move Calisthenics Victoria forward and what goals are you seeing to accomplish them? Also, how will you integrate technology into those goals?

**A. Liam Murphy:** Hi @Tod Caflisch that's for the question. Three key areas we're working on include:

Firstly, one of our objectives is making sure our data is accurate and is segmented correctly to ensure we have a really good picture of our business at anyone time. We've previously had a very old crm and historically hadn't captured a lot of information on our community. This will help deliver on most of the key goals going forward.

We are keen to grow the sports participation rate. Currently we have a limited "product" offering being traditional calisthenics, one thing we will be delivering is multiple recreational products to get more people doing Calisthenics in a way that is less onerous on peoples recreational time and we see this as an opportunity to use technology to bring the sport to a wider community. We will be using our crm to accurately track our offerings once they are developed to see if we are growing the participation rate of the sport.

As we have a 99% female supporter base with an average age of 16 we're keen to positively impact on their development as they go through the sport. As a result we will be developing a health and wellness digital program via an app and through our current social following to ensure our impressionable community are supported.

Finally, we require strong corporate partnerships to build the above mentioned programs to take our sport centre stage. Our goal is to reduce our reliance on government funding allowing us to develop sustainable product offerings. A big program for us will be to clearly identify opportunities for partnerships and to explore ways in which technologies can assist.

**Q. Sean Callanan:** @Liam Murphy you discussed in answer to @Tod Caflisch data and digital goals. It's good to know what you're using. Can you give us a rundown on some of the tech/platforms you are using? Email, CRM, apps. All answers are valid Google Forms and/or Excel still get a run in a lot of places.

**A. Liam Murphy:** Hi @seancallanan thank you for the question. Currently we are using a wide variety of tech, these include:

CRM - we use Revolutionise sport to manage our database. This is a new initiative and we're transitioning our older CRM's (sign up for volunteers, and access for general members). Nick and the guys at Rev sport have been really flexible and are working with us to ensure our database captures what we want it to.

We are working with a start up called my stage who look after our comp registration and management process. Our sports requirements for the comp space is a little different as our clubs choose which comp the compete in and there are times when we have two teams from the same club competing. My stage look after these requirements for us.

To ensure we have our finger on the pulse we are using [Survey Monkey](#) to survey our members and key stakeholders. That being said we will be moving this fiction to rev sport in due course as we will have all our member details there. Which will allow us to develop more specific surveys including a new member survey and a survey for those leaving the sport.

From a social media perspective we use Canva for our media development, and Hootsuite to manage our socials. Our socials are mainly Instagram and Facebook with a focus on imagery as the sport is amazing from that respect. We are also moving into Snapchat as it's popularity is growing within our community. We are also turning our focus to google analytics for our website traffics.

From an internal communication perspective we use slack, it's been a great help in separating external communication and staff.

We use Xero for accounting and financial analysis and the team at sports accounting Australia really assist in this space.

As you've mentioned we have a number of key aspects of our sport managed by spreadsheet, however these are reducing as we use more of the capabilities available to us through our CRM.

I'm sure I may have missed a couple but that's a start.

**Q. [Isaak Dury](#):** Hi @Liam Murphy, how do you think you can make the sport more sustainable from a financial point of view?

**A. Liam Murphy:** Hi @Isaak Dury thank you for the question.

We understand that our sport needs to review its product selection to ensure we appeal to our traditional users, but we also have offerings that suit non traditional users. Our overarching need is to have more people active in the sport, supporting our clubs, and ultimately allowing us to develop more resources to bring the sport forward.

Financially, our focus will be strong commercial partnerships with like minded companies, and to be selective with the government grants we choose to go with. To ensure we can paint a picture appropriate to meet the needs of potential partners. To help with identification, we will be focusing our attention on gathering and assessing the data of our users and potential users.

**Q. [Sophie Moore](#):** Hi @Liam Murphy, being a state sport on the smaller end of the spectrum compared to your AFL, soccer, basketball etc., engagement and awareness outside of your current membership can be quite interesting to navigate. With your current team how are you navigating task delegation with the resources have available? Do you believe that the corporate and financial relationships you are looking towards as mentioned will be a crucial piece of the puzzle?

**A. Liam Murphy:** Hi @sophiemore thank you for the question.

This is something the sport has been working on over the last couple of years. Firstly, with the help of consultant Lisa Glassborow from Hatrick Communications we've re-branded the organisation to make it more appealing to non-cali people. We have then run the new brand campaign using social platforms (facebook, instagram). In recent times this has lead to some great outcomes from a partnership perspective, and we will be using the additional resources to develop new cali products to further assist our clubs to attract more people to the sport.

As you've mentioned the additional resources plus appropriate grants will be crucial to move the sport forward.

**Q. [Dan Gardner](#):** Hi @Liam Murphy I'm a Dad to 8-year old young girl, how are you promoting participation to kids especially girls with so many options available these days?

**A. Liam Murphy:** Hi @Dan Gardner thank you for the question.

Historically participation programs have been left to each individual club to develop and run. As a result, they've had mixed results. We will be spending the next 3 years developing, testing, and delivering new rec programs for our clubs to use and assist them further to make sure they can easily attract families like yours.

## What is Sports Geek Nation?

Been forwarded this from a colleague? That's great we love seeing our members get credit for sharing their knowledge. Sports Geek Nation is a curated sports business community in Slack and Facebook which will help you learn from the very best in the world. Sports Geek Nation was founded by Sean Callanan in 2015 (as #SportsBiz Slack), it connects sports executives who work in digital, data and technology.

Sports Geek Nation has members from (in alphabetical order) Australia, Canada, Denmark, India, Lithuania, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States working in sports such as basketball, football, ice hockey, baseball, AFL, horse racing, golf, rugby league, netball and more.

You can join Sports Geek Nation by going to [SportsGeekNation.com](https://SportsGeekNation.com)