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SPORT PROMOTIONAL MIX

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Abstract

In sport marketing, the word promotion covers a range of interrelated activities. All of these activities are designed to attract attention, stimulate the interest and awareness of consumers, and of course, encourage them to purchase a sport product. Promotion is about communicating with consumers and educating them. The purpose of a sport promotional strategy is to build brand loyalty and product credibility, develop image, and position the brand. A promotional strategy is similar to a marketing strategy, but the promotional strategy seeks short-term objectives, both direct and indirect. Promotional objectives usually include increased sales, stimulate impulse buying, raise customer traffic, and present and reinforce image. It also provides information about products and services, publicizes new stores or websites, and creates and enhances customer satisfaction.

Introduction

Sport is one of the most important social concepts. Many companies use sports as a tool to create brand loyalty. The companies using professional athletes produce the image that their equipment is the reason why the athlete is successful. As a result, the equipment produced by the company sells very well.

The term 'sport marketing' was first used in the United States by the *Advertising Age* in 1978. Since then it has been used to describe a variety of activities associated with sport promotion.

Sport marketing is the application of marketing concepts to sport products and services, and the marketing of non-sport products through an association to sport. Sport marketing therefore has two key features. First, it is the application of general marketing practices to sport-related products and services. Second, it is the marketing of other consumer and industrial products or services through sport.

According to Pitts and Stotlar (2007), in a sport marketing perspective, promotion applied to the sport industry is defined as the function of informing or influencing people about the sport company's products, community involvement, or image. In this definition the many segments of people to whom the sport company promotes are a significant factor when developing promotion strategies. The sport company promotes to the end consumer, the business consumer, the general community, the business community, and the media. To inform means that the sport company wants to tell them something. To influence means that the sport company wants a specific action from the person. Usually, the final action wanted is a purchase action.

SPORT PROMOTIONAL MIX

The most important elements of sport promotions (also known as the sport promotional mix) include: advertising, sponsorship, public relations, licensing and personal selling.

Advertising

Advertising is one-way paid messages about the sport product (Internet – especially social media, newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, direct mail, scoreboards, in-arena signage, pocket schedules, game programs, posters, outdoor advertising).

Advertisements make sports more popular. All the organizations hoping for profit use concepts like arts and sports to introduce or recreate themselves. This is the basic factor in sport image. Sport image can be used in various types in society. The basic objective of advertisements is to link the product with success, and for the consumer to transfer that image of success to the product.

Advertising is a controlled medium. That is, the message delivered to the consumer is carefully crafted and controlled by the organization so that its content consists of only information that the organization wishes the consumer to receive. However, because the company controls advertising, its credibility with consumers may be low.

In sport, advertising can take many forms. There is advertising of sport products and services and advertising through sport events.

The major issue facing the sport marketer's use of advertising is whether to stress reach or frequency. Reach refers to the identification of potential consumers, and frequency relates to the number of exposures required to access the consumer. Both are critical to a successful advertising strategy. When determining reach, the advertiser must

decide which consumers are being targeted. When determining frequency, the advertiser must decide how many exposures are necessary to reach the prospective consumer. Here, factors such as price, the stage in the product's life cycle, purchase frequency and competitive advertising need to be addressed. It should be remembered that it takes a number of exposures to communicate a specific message, as there are always communication barriers to overcome.

With a distributed campaign, the advertising budget is used evenly throughout the year for a predefined period. The percentage of recall is initially low, but recall elevates with repeated weekly exposure. Activities, such as professional sports which are constant, result in a playoff period and have a limited off season, mainly use a distributed advertising budget. It should be remembered that all advertising campaigns have time limits in terms of effectiveness. However, eventual advertising wear-out can be delayed by introducing variations on the theme.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a form of promotion that involves a partnership between sport organizations or events and corporate entities. Business partnerships are based on exchange theory. Corporations provide money, products, or services to sport organizations or events, and in return sport organizations or events provide rights and benefits of association. If the sponsorship is to be successful, continue, and grow, both parties must perceive the exchange as fair, and the sponsoring corporation must determine that it has achieved an acceptable return on investment (ROI). Sponsorship agreements may include but are not limited to the following rights and benefits: use of the sport organization or event logo, name,

or trademark; exclusive association with the event or facility; exclusive association within a product or service category; use of various designations or phrases in connection with the product, event, or facility, such as "official sponsor", "official supplier", "official product", or "presented by"; exclusive use of the product; and authorization to conduct particular promotional activities such as contests, advertising campaigns, or on-site product sales.

Sport sponsorship relationships offer the corporate sponsor and the sport brand to project their image, increase their audience, and amplify the number and quality of media opportunities. With this in mind, the potential corporate sponsor and the sport organization should have similar target markets, and have a mutual understanding about the mission, goals, objectives, and vision for each other. This information is then utilized to develop sport sponsorship proposals and negotiate sport sponsorship agreements. Sport sponsorships are designed to articulate the benefits derived from the agreement for all parties involved.

Corporations make significant investments in sport for a number of reasons, such as: to establish or improve their image through association with high-visibility events; to promote their products, thereby increasing sales; to display goodwill; and to obtain access and exposure to the events' target markets.

Sport events benefit from the sponsorship arrangement because the corporations often provide the events with products, services, and financial resources. Obtaining sport sponsorships is important for the overall marketing success of sport because sponsorships often provide sport marketers with the resources necessary to package, promote, and deliver their events.

Public relations

Public relations are concerned with building a good image for sport organisations. It is important for sport organisations to have a good relationship with different groups in the community, including the media, government sport departments, local councils and even fan clubs. To have a good relationship with these groups, sport organisations need to communicate with them on a regular basis. It is therefore essential that sport organisations identify what sort of information about their products public groups will be interested in. Once determined it is a matter of working out how to communicate this information in a way that will enhance the sport organisation's reputation and cultivate the improvement of relationships.

Public relations are different relating to other forms of promotion in that it is free to a sport organisation. It usually involves getting some information into the mass media as a news item. For this reason, public relations are often called publicity. Publicity focuses on the use of unpaid, non-personal promotion of a sport product or service through a third party that publishes print media or presents information through radio, television, or the Internet. The goal of any good publicity is that it is viewed as coming from an unbiased, neutral source.

As a sport marketing professional, understanding and utilizing public relations is critical to success, as it is the management function that helps to evaluate public attitudes, articulate policies and procedures of an organization that may be of public interest, and execute programs of action to acquire public understanding and approval. Three aspects of public relations utilized in sport marketing efforts are media relations, sports information, and sport journalism.

Licensing

The licensing process gives sport organizations the opportunity to establish a presence in a specified marketplace while also creating a new source of revenue. This is most often accomplished through the creation of licensed merchandise, such as hats, shirts, uniforms, and other apparel. The goal of licensing is to enhance brand awareness and appeal, especially in new markets. The licensing process involves protecting an intellectual property such as a logo or mark. The intellectual property may be registered publicly, for example in the form of a patent or trademark, as a means of establishing ownership rights. It may also be retained within the firm. Commonly referred to as *know-how*, this intellectual property is commonly based on operational experience.

Personal selling

One of the most effective ways to promote products and services is through one-on-one communication between a representative of the sport organization and the sport consumer. The goal of personal contact is to provide additional information about products and services in a manner that is not sales based or visibly targeted. The sport marketing professional seeks to build awareness of the organization and its products and services through goodwill in the community, and social involvement with the members of the population. This is accomplished through community relations and "giving back" efforts through socialization.

Personal selling is one of the most important activities in the promotional mix because it is the revenue-producing element. Sport marketers consider personal selling unique and highly effective because it involves face-to-face interaction with the target audiences rather than mass

communication to thousands of consumers. Personal interaction with consumers allows sales people to adapt messages based on feedback, communicate more information to the target audience, guarantee that the target audience will pay attention to the message that is being delivered, and develop a long-term relationship with the target audience. Successful salespeople realize they must adapt their sales pitch to the selling situation.

Conclusions

In many segments of the sport industry, sport marketers are pressured to increase their product sales to generate increased revenues for their organizations. This pressure poses a challenge. Because sport marketers are involved in persuading consumers to buy, they run the risk of exaggerating or misrepresenting their products in an effort to sell them. Today and in the future, sport marketers should recognize this risk and monitor their marketing strategies to ensure that they communicate honest images and messages about their products that are consistent with the core values of their organizations.

Selecting the correct promotion mix is potentially one of the most difficult decisions facing the sport promoter. As it is the case when selecting the appropriate marketing mix, the blend of promotion activities engaged in the enticement of the consumer must reflect the type and nature of the product or service and the specific characteristics of the consumer.

Promotion is the way in which sport marketers communicate with potential consumers in order to inform, persuade and remind them about a product or brand. The aim of promotion is to encourage consumers

to develop a favourable opinion about a product or brand with the intention of stimulating them to try it. There are three main objectives of promotion: to inform, to persuade, and to remind.

There are a number of generalizations that can be made about promotion. Promotions temporarily increase sales substantially; promotion in one product category affects sales of brands in complementary and competitive categories; and promotions can result in increased traffic. Most of the generalizations are true; however, it is important to understand how to utilize these elements in order to ensure that the results are longer lasting, and lead to maintaining current customers and attracting new ones.

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Figure 1: The sport promotional mix

