

# Module 2. Understanding of customer needs

## Unit 2.1

In this second module of the Managing Service Quality in Sport Events course, we will focus, once again, on customers, but this time on how to best understand them. To do that, we need to focus on customer needs, their diversity, and the fundamental tools to capture them. The main tool to better capture consumer needs and, indeed, understand who sport event, league, and competition consumers are, is through the process of segmentation. This fundamental process of examining customers/fans in detail, to identify aspects that can allow us to categorise them into different groups, has attracted significant academic attention and found practical applications in the world of sport. In this module, we will explore customer segmentation in sport events in detail, to provide both information on their theoretical appreciation and managerial insight, and on their practical applications.

## Unit 2.2 Customer needs

Customer needs refer to the specific desires, requirements, or expectations that customers have when they seek a product or service. These needs can be categorised into various dimensions, according to Zeithaml *et al.* (2006) and Masterman (2021):

1. Functional needs. These needs are related to the core purpose or utility that customers expect from a product or service. For example, a customer may need a smartphone to make calls, send messages, access the internet, and use various applications.
2. Performance needs. They are specific requirements regarding the quality, reliability, speed, accuracy, durability, or other measurable aspects of a product or service. Customers may have expectations for high performance, efficiency, or effectiveness in achieving their goals.
3. Relational needs. They involve customers' desire for positive interactions, trust, and a sense of connection with the organisation or service provider. This includes factors such as friendly customer service, personalised attention, responsiveness, and effective communication.



4. Emotional needs. They pertain to customers' desires for positive feelings or experiences associated with a product or service. It can include aspects such as enjoyment, excitement, satisfaction, comfort, or a sense of belonging.
5. Social needs. They are related to customers' desire to be accepted, recognised, or respected by others. It can involve factors like status, reputation, social influence, or the need for affiliation with a particular group or community.
6. Psychological needs. They are needs that encompass customers' desires for personal well-being, self-expression, self-esteem, or self-fulfilment. It can include factors such as convenience, simplicity, aesthetics, personal values, or the need for autonomy.

Understanding and fulfilling customer needs is crucial for businesses to provide value and satisfy their target market. However, before we move on to the element of understanding them, it is worth acknowledging that customer needs in the world of sport and particularly in sport events are changing, due to various macroeconomic factors. These changing customer needs in sport events will be discussed below.

Customer needs can be categorised in to various dimensions, according to Zeithmal et al. (2006) and Masterman (2021). Identify the three correct options:

- **Functional needs.**
- **Performance needs.**
- **Relational needs.**
- Commercial needs.

## Unit 2.3 Customer needs in sport events

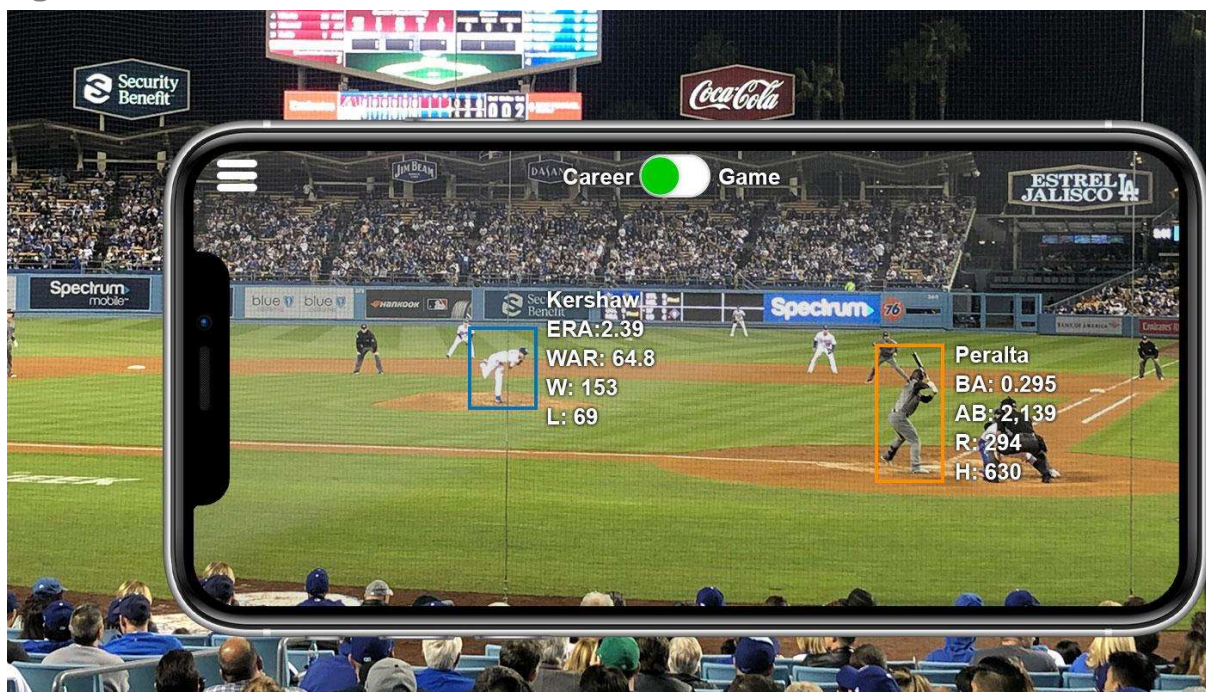
Customer needs in sport events have been evolving and changing recently, due to several external and internal factors, as we will discuss here. First, it is noted that customers are increasingly seeking immersive and unique experiences in sport events. Indeed, we notice that fans are no longer satisfied with merely watching the game; instead, they want a comprehensive and engaging experience that includes entertainment, interactive activities, and opportunities to connect with other fans and athletes (Masterman, 2021).

As a result of this, customers now expect personalised experiences in sport events. They desire customised ticketing options, seat preferences, and tailored offerings that align with their interests and preferences. Event organisers are leveraging technology to provide personalised recommendations, exclusive experiences, and targeted promotions to enhance the attendee experience (Funk *et al.*, 2008). In fact, the integration of technology has transformed customer expectations in sport events. Customers now

expect seamless digital experiences, mobile ticketing, real-time updates, interactive apps, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) experiences. Technology-driven enhancements improve engagement, convenience, and the overall event experience.

Let us see some of the already existing and, indeed, exciting ways in which these have been implemented in sport and how they can already help to meet customer needs. For example, the use of augmented reality in sport events can assist sport event attendees in getting a completely new experience while they are at an event. Let us look at the example illustrated in the picture below. The attendees of this baseball match can use AR and get details through their phone on the careers of the players they are interested in (Concannon, 2019). These customers/fans are therefore getting a personalised, unique experience that can meet and even exceed their needs.

**Figure 1. AR in a baseball match**



Source: [untitled image of AR in a baseball match], 2019, <https://bit.ly/3sTnc5p>.

Moreover, as we studied in module 1, there is a growing emphasis on health and wellness in sport events. Customers are seeking events that promote active lifestyles, provide wellness activities, and prioritise safety and hygiene measures (Piggin *et al.*, 2019). Events that incorporate wellness programmes, healthy food options, and opportunities for physical activity are gaining popularity. As such, sport events, leagues, and competitions organisers are expected to demonstrate that they are actively promoting health and well-being.

An example of this would be the partnership the World Health Organisation [WHO] formed with FIFA and the organising committee of the 2022 Qatar World Cup.

**Figure 2. World Health Organisation, FIFA, and the Qatar 2022 World Cup Organising Committee partnership**



Source: WHO, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3Rnhask>.

The photograph portrays the partnership announcement between the WHO, FIFA, and the Qatar 2022 World Cup Organising Committee to use the World Cup to promote health.

As the WHO (2022) reports, the partnership, launched in 2021, highlighted the commitment:

- to protect the health of all those involved in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, through measures against the spread of COVID-19 and the provision of healthy food options;
- to use the World Cup in Qatar as a platform to promote healthy lifestyles through physical activity and playing football;
- to create a blueprint to protect and promote health at future mass gatherings, moving forward from the pandemic.

On the same line, customers are increasingly concerned about environmental sustainability. They expect sport events to prioritise eco-friendly practices, reduce waste, and promote sustainability initiatives (Casper *et al.*, 2020). Events that embrace eco-consciousness, implement green initiatives, and promote environmental awareness resonate with customers who prioritise sustainability.

Using the same mega-sport event as an example, in the 2022 Qatar World Cup, we saw a significant focus on the sustainability efforts of the organisers, with FIFA arguing that ensuring that the event would be executed sustainably was one of their priorities. Indeed, academic research on the matter suggests that a very detailed sustainability strategy existed behind the organising of the event, with the FIFA World Cup 2022 Sustainability Strategy covering five pillars, 22 objectives and over 70 different initiatives designed to deliver the objective of the strategy (Lundberg, 2022). This strategy, according to the same academic study, is by far the most comprehensive sustainability strategy for any FIFA event, and it sets a new benchmark for future sustainability strategies for FIFA World Cups

(Lundberg, 2022). The strategy is well-illustrated below and demonstrates its different pillars on which the objectives and initiatives were based. It is worth emphasising that strategies such as this were designed in response to customer needs for sport events, leagues, and competitions.

**Figure 3. The FIFA World Cup 2022 sustainability framework's five strategic pillars**



Source: Lundberg, 2022, p. 58.

In the same strategy illustrated in the figure above, we can also see one of the other developing customer needs: the need for inclusivity and diversity (Scheinbaum and Lacey, 2015). Nowadays, customers are advocating for more inclusive and diverse sport events and, as such, they expect events to be accessible to all, regardless of gender, race, disability, or socioeconomic background. Event organisers are recognising the importance of inclusivity and are working towards providing accessible facilities, diverse representation, and fostering an inclusive atmosphere.

Along the same lines, as it is, once again, also visible as one of the pillars of the 2022 Qatar World Cup Sustainability Strategy pictured above, customers are increasingly drawn to sport events that have a positive social impact. They expect events to align with social causes, support local communities, and contribute to philanthropic efforts. As such, events that integrate social responsibility initiatives, engage in charitable partnerships, or promote community development attract customers who value social impact.

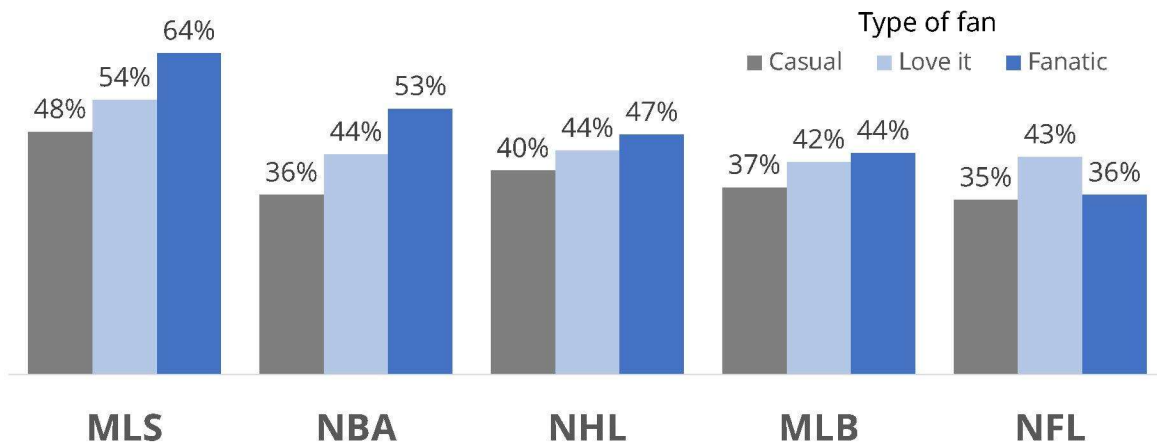
At this point, it is worth noticing that the examples provided here are all focused on the strategies and actions designed by the sport competition and event organisers, and not on their actual implementation. That is to say that the 2022 Qatar World Cup was developing strategies to respond to customer needs, while it was addressing the very vivid criticism FIFA was receiving on its practices until that point, something that will, nevertheless, not be captured in this course since it exceeds the aims set.

Finally, another customer need that emerged through external factors is the need for hybrid and remote experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the demand for hybrid and remote sport event experiences, with customers now seeking opportunities to engage with events virtually, through live-streaming, online fan interactions, and social media engagement (Jarvis, 2019). Hybrid events that offer both in-person and remote participation options cater to the evolving needs of customers, something that can be further assisted with the use of new technological advances.

In this line, virtual reality is also providing an additional exciting new prospect for sport event, league, and competition organisers, since it provides them with opportunities that were not available before to use such hybrid experiences options. Case in point are the results of a recent study conducted by Deloitte (Jarvis, 2019), focusing on how fans would perceive the use of virtual reality in sport event broadcasting. In the study, it was shown that a large percentage of fans would agree that, if a broadcast or over-the-top (streaming) channel featured virtual reality first-row seats, it would have a positive impact on their desire to watch a game. The actual percentages of the fans of each Northern American league examined can be seen in the next figure.

**Figure 4. VR acceptance by sport fans**

**Percentage of fans agreeing that if a broadcast or over-the-top channel featured virtual reality first-row seats, it would have a positive impact on their desire to watch a game**



Source: Jarvis, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3r7jDNp>.

Taking all the above into consideration, these changing customer needs in sport events require event, league, and competition organisers to adapt and innovate to meet the evolving expectations.

However, to do so, they need to appreciate the complexity and diversity of customer needs, stemming from the significant differences among them. Simply put, since customers are diverse, so are their needs, and it is only through understanding their differences that we can accurately capture what it is they need. To do that and thus better understand customers, the important process of segmentation was developed both by academics that were trying to better examine the phenomenon, and by practitioners who wanted to apply it to improve their practices. The process of segmentation captures an important step needed for an organisation to develop a true customer-centric approach in response to the needs of the environment. This process will be detailed below.



What customer needs have emerged due external factors, like Covid-19 pandemic?

- **Hybrid and remote experiences.**
- Live experiences.
- Visual experiences.
- Secure experiences.

## Unit 2.4 Customer segmentation

Customer segmentation is the process of dividing a customer base into distinct groups or segments based on shared characteristics, preferences, behaviours, or needs (Funk *et al.*, 2008). The goal of customer segmentation is to better understand the different customer segments and tailor marketing strategies, products, and services to meet the specific needs and preferences of each segment.

Some common approaches to customer segmentation include the following aspects (Funk *et al.*, 2008):

1. Demographic segmentation is dividing customers based on demographic characteristics such as age, gender, income, education, occupation, or marital status. Demographic segmentation provides a broad understanding of customer profiles and helps in targeting specific customer segments. For example, a sport event may target a specific age group, such as young adults (18–24 years old) or focus on attracting families with children.
2. Psychographic segmentation is segmenting customers based on psychological traits, lifestyle choices, values, interests, attitudes, or behaviours. Psychographic segmentation goes beyond demographics and focuses on understanding customers' motivations, aspirations, and preferences. For example, organising an event for adventure sports enthusiasts or targeting health-conscious individuals for a wellness-focused sport event.
3. Behavioural segmentation is the division of customers based on their behaviours, such as purchasing patterns, frequency of purchases, brand loyalty, product usage, or response to marketing campaigns. Behavioural segmentation helps identify customers with similar buying behaviours and tailor marketing efforts accordingly.
4. Geographic segmentation is segmenting customers based on their geographical location, such as country, region, city, or neighbourhood. This segmentation is useful when organising regional or local sport events. For example, targeting residents of a specific city or neighbourhood for a community sports event or organising a regional tournament for schools in a particular district.



5. Participation level segmentation is segmenting the audience based on their level of participation or involvement in the sport. This segmentation targets different groups, such as casual spectators, amateur participants, or professional athletes. For example, organising a sport event specifically for recreational players or targeting serious athletes for a competitive tournament.
6. Team affinity segmentation is segmenting the audience based on their affiliation or loyalty to specific sports teams. This segmentation targets fans who support a particular team or have a strong interest in a specific sport. For example, organising an event specifically for fans of a local football team or targeting basketball enthusiasts.
7. Ticketing segmentation is segmenting the audience based on their ticket preferences or purchasing behaviour. This segmentation helps in offering different ticketing options or packages tailored to specific groups. For example, providing premium seating options for VIP guests or offering discounted tickets for student groups.
8. Sponsorship segmentation is segmenting the audience based on their potential as sponsors or corporate partners. This segmentation targets businesses or organisations that may have an interest in sponsoring or partnering with the sport event. For example, targeting companies in the fitness or sports industry as potential sponsors for a marathon event.
9. Technographic segmentation is segmenting customers based on their technology adoption, usage, or preferences. Technographic segmentation considers factors such as device usage, social media presence, online behaviour, or technology preferences to target customers effectively.

The specific segmentation approach chosen depends on the business objectives, available data, and the level of granularity desired. Effective customer segmentation allows businesses to understand the diverse needs and preferences of different customer groups, customise marketing strategies, optimise resource allocation, and provide personalised experiences that resonate with each segment. It helps businesses target their efforts more efficiently, enhance customer engagement, and build stronger customer relationships.

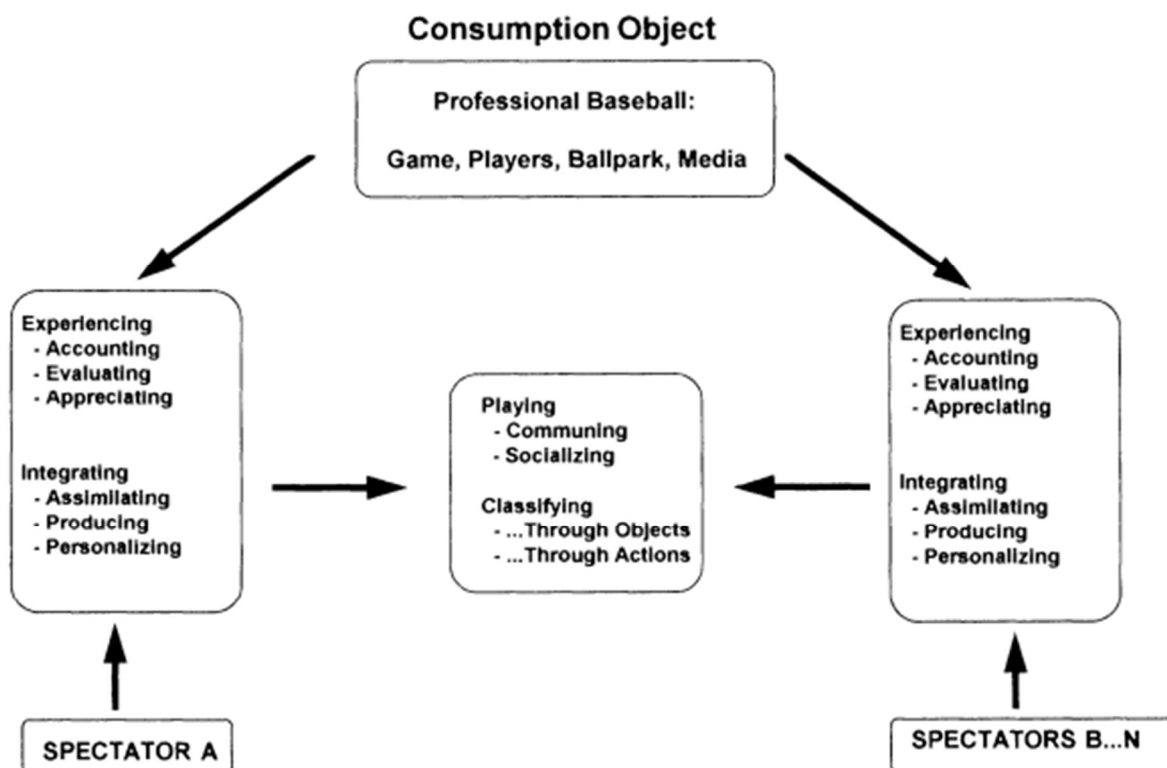
Customer segmentation is:

- **The process of dividing a customer base into distinct groups or segments based on shared characteristics, preferences, behaviours or needs.**
- The process of unifying a customer base into a single group base on common characteristics, preferences, behaviours or needs.

## Unit 2.5 Customer segmentation in events: theory

The topic of customer segmentation has been explored in detail in academia, with the seminar work of Holt (1995) initiating the discussion through his exploration of how baseball consumers consume the sport. In his work, as it is well illustrated in the below figure, we can see that different spectators might be experiencing and integrating the sport in their own identity individually and then playing and classifying it differently through their interactions with others. Therefore, Holt (1995), through his work, set the basis for sport spectators' segmentation, focusing on psychometric characteristics and their behaviour.

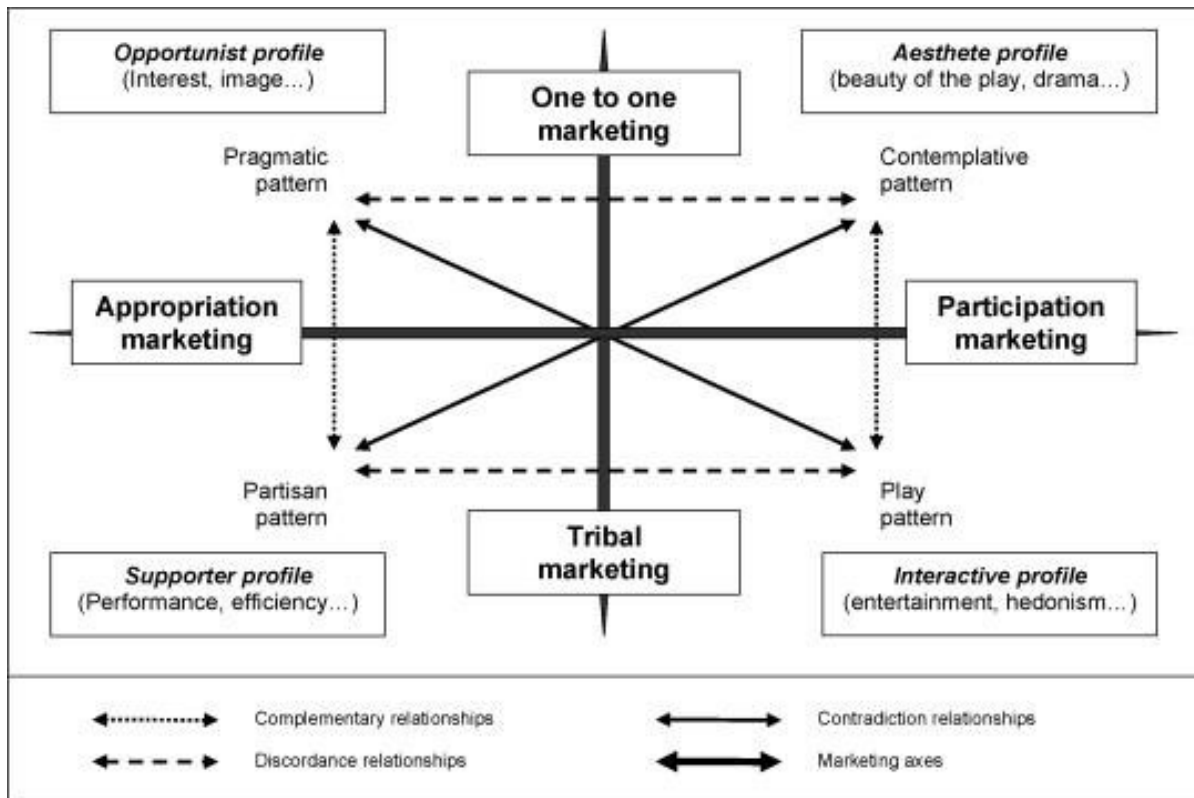
Figure 5. Consuming professional baseball: a model of spectator consumption practices



Source: Holt, 1995, p. 4.

This study sparked significant academic inquiry on the topic, with several studies conducted since focusing on sport spectator segmentation. One of them is worth examining here in more detail. The study by Bouchet *et al.* (2011) aimed to create and test a tool for identifying different types of sport spectators, based on spectator behaviours that are identifiable by their dominant patterns of the experiences they seek in both physical and social contexts. Through their analysis, the following comprehensive framework was developed, capturing the four profile or segments of sport spectators identified (pictured in the four corners of the figure), the relationships they have between them, and the marketing that would be best applicable to each segment.

**Figure 6. Sport spectator consumption patterns and associated marketing strategies**



Source: Bouchet *et al.*, 2011, p. 46.

Therefore, their study not only progressed existing knowledge on the matter by better capturing how sport event customers can be segmented, but also detailed the relationships between the different segments and the managerial implications that this has (Bouchet *et al.*, 2011). So, let us investigate a bit more detail on what their findings suggest.

First, as we can see below, there exist four segments of sport event customers (Bouchet *et al.*, 2011): the opportunists, or those interested in their image and self-promotion; the aesthete or those interested in the beauty of the game and the drama produced within it; the supporter, or those interested in the performance and efficiency of the game and the



athletes, and the interactive, or those interested in the entertainment value of the event. These four distinctive segments appear to have different relationships among them. The opportunist and supporter segments appear to have a complementary relationship between them, and so do the aesthete with the interactive. At the same time, discordance relationships appear to exist between the opportunist and aesthete segment, and between the support and the interactive segment. Finally, contradiction relationships also exist among the segments, particularly between the opportunist and the interactive profile, and between the aesthete and the supporter profile.

In terms of managerial implications, apart from a useful tool to adapt to different sport events, this study provides us with clear recommendations on what types of marketing could be used to better approach the different segments (Bouchet *et al.*, 2011). In more detail, one-to-one marketing is recommended for fans that would fall under the opportunist and the aesthete segments; participation marketing should be used for fans under the aesthete and interactive segments; tribal marketing for the interactive and the supporter segments, and appropriation marketing for the supporter and the opportunist segments.

## Unit 2.6 Customer segmentation in events: practice

A real-life example of how such a segmentation analysis can occur in sport events is the one conducted on Welsh regional rugby supporters by Kidd and Williams (2004). The two authors conducted their analysis based on the following: “(a) what being a supporter means to them, (b) attendance behaviour, (c) threats to their commitment, (d) effect of regionalisation, (e) demographic profile, (f) proportion of a live match crowd they represent, and (g) population and revenue growth potential” (Kidd and Williams, 2004, para. 8).

It is worth stressing that the authors highlighted that “Each description is of a ‘typical’ representative of each segment. In reality, of course, the supporters we would place in a particular segment will exhibit differing degrees of its defining characteristics” (Kidd and Williams, 2004, para. 8).

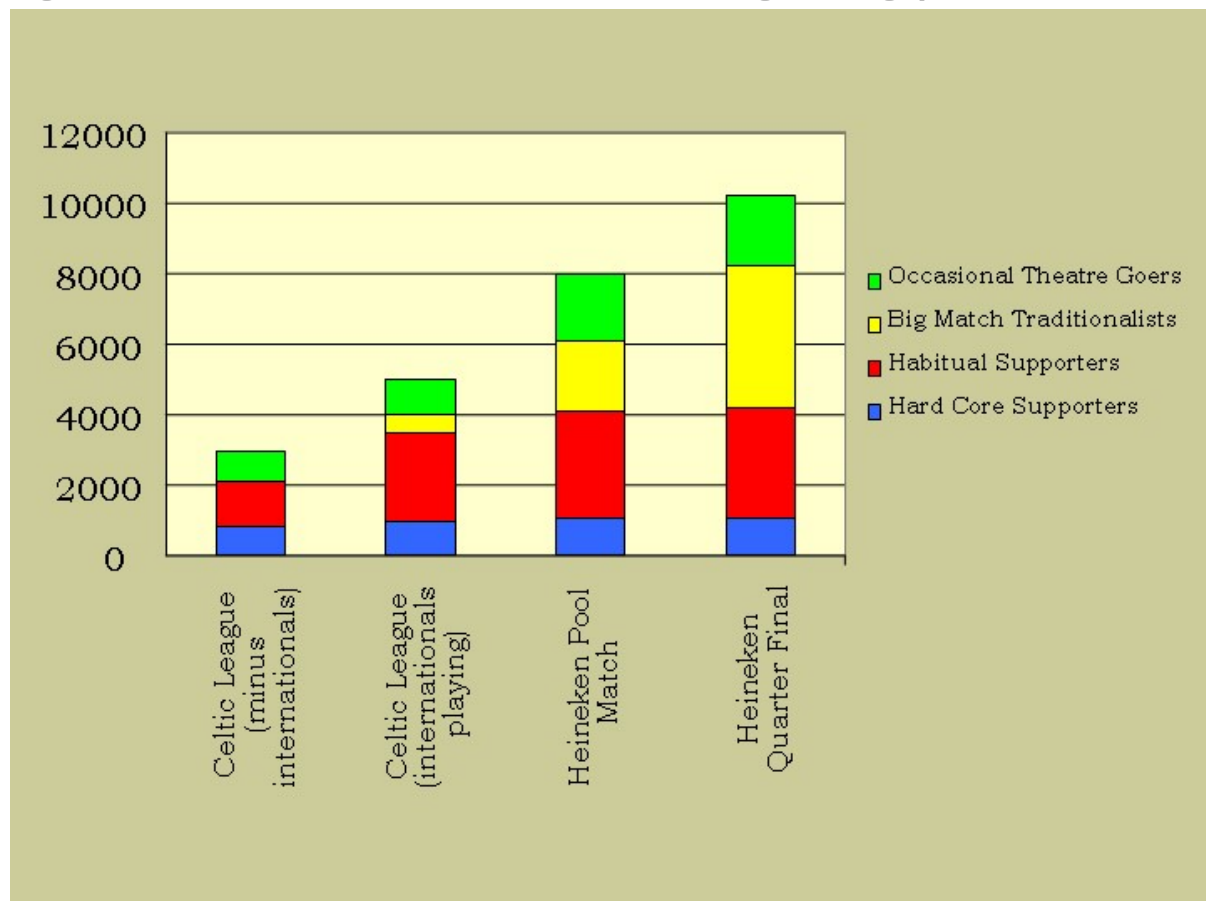
Through their analysis, they argue that four segmentation profiles exist, which they name:

- Hard core supporters
- Habitual supporters
- Big match traditionalists
- Occasional theatre goers



These segments, presented in order of what being a supporter means for them, with the first category being the most identified with the sport and the last being the least, are then captured in terms of their attendance in the four typical regional matches which occur in a season. The authors then present the matches by capturing the percentage of the segments out of the total of attendees in the events in the following figure.

**Figure 7. The four segments' contribution to the varying crowd sizes at four typical regional matches which occur in a season in Welsh regional rugby**



Source: Kidd and Williams, 2004, <https://bit.ly/46fApV>.

Finally, another example of real-life fan segmentation that is worth examining is that conducted by the market research agency Team Epic (Broughton, 2012). Their analysis, which they argue was a laborious effort spanning over a year, was conducted for practical insight with thus a clear managerial contribution to be provided to the fans of sports in the US market.

What is worth highlighting about this study is that the analysis is based on the fans' lifestyle, an aspect not examined often. In more detail, they argue that the criteria on which the segmentation was conducted were "Characteristics such as avidity,



engagement with sponsors, socioeconomic status and personal outlook on life” (Broughton, 2012, para. 2).

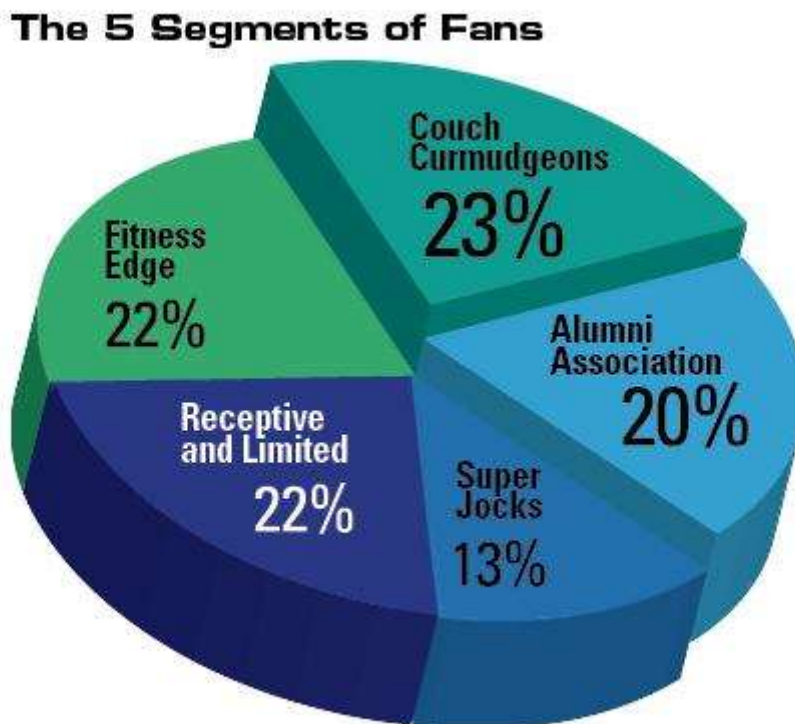
This very interesting approach adopted by the agency suggested that there exist five different segments or types of fans that capture sport fans in the US.

These are the following:

- Couch curmudgeons: oldest and least active. They prefer watching sports at home. They also are the least optimistic about the future, are the least open to sponsors, and are not actively involved in sponsor programmes.
- Alumni association: older male sports fans with high disposable income and heavily invested in college sports. Open to sponsorship and influenced by sponsor programmes (although not as much as super jocks).
- Super jocks: very young and male-dominated group with the second-highest average household income. Highly social and active, and the most likely to identify themselves as outdoor enthusiasts. They seek live events and are heavily into tailgating and fantasy sports. Very open to sponsorship and exceed all groups in their level of participation in sponsor programmes.
- Receptive and limited: mix of male and female sports fans. Second oldest of any segment; below-average income. Much more likely to follow pro sports and like NASCAR. Highly receptive to sponsors (viewing them as important and exhibiting good will toward them) but given their lower levels of disposable income, they are more conscious about spending money.
- Fitness edge: most female of any group and very diverse. Younger and very physically active, with average income levels. More likely to follow pro sports and love the Olympics. Most active on social media. Have a positive view of sponsors but are selective about how they get involved in promotions, sponsor programmes, etc. (Broughton, 2012, para. 4-8).

This analysis is illustrated in the figure below, in which the size of each segment is also included.

Figure 8. The five segments of fans of the US market according to their lifestyle



Source: Broughton, 2012, <https://bit.ly/3PBRtmS>.

Interestingly, while this analysis is wider than just sport event consumers and captures all sports fans, including those like the 'couch curmudgeons' who prefer to watch sports at home, it also points towards the lifestyle choices of the segments that are more interested and indeed actively seek live events, either the ones based in the US, such as college sports, or international mega-sport events, like the Olympics.

This can then have direct managerial implications for sport event, league, and competition organisers, who can better understand who the interested segments are, and thus better focus on their needs, in a more targeted approach. It is, once again, worth mentioning that the agency paid particular attention to the managerial contribution of their study, as the following quote from them suggests: "Segmentation like this will allow marketers to be more strategic in their property selection by understanding how various fan bases react to sponsors and what type of activation programs are most likely to engage them" (Broughton, 2012, p. 2).

Having discussed the importance of segmentation and its theoretical and practical applications, it is now worth focusing on another important aspect: the challenges that exist in customer segmentation, which we will capture below.

## Unit 2.7 Challenges in customer segmentation

Segmentation in sport events can present several challenges that event, league, and competition organisers need to navigate. First, obtaining accurate and reliable data for segmentation can be challenging, especially when dealing with a diverse and large audience (Funk *et al.*, 2008). Data collection methods, such as surveys or registration forms, may not capture all relevant information, and there can be limitations in accessing or verifying demographic or psychographic data.

At the same time, even when data is available, there may be instances where individuals fall into multiple segments simultaneously, making it difficult to tailor specific strategies or messages for each segment. This overlapping can create complexity in developing targeted marketing approaches that effectively resonate with each group.

Moreover, collecting data at one moment in time is not enough since preferences can evolve. Consumer preferences and behaviours can change over time, posing challenges in segmenting the audience accurately (Funk *et al.*, 2008). Sports fans may shift allegiances, develop new interests, or change their level of participation, requiring regular updates and adjustments to segmentation strategies. At the same time, some segments within the target audience may be small or niche, posing challenges in reaching and engaging them effectively. Limited resources or reach can make it difficult to target and attract these specific segments with tailored marketing efforts.

On a wider scale, it is worth acknowledging that sports events often face competition from other events, entertainment options, or distractions. Understanding the competitive landscape and identifying opportunities to differentiate the event experience for each segment can be challenging (Funk *et al.*, 2008). Similarly, challenges can be met in encouraging participation and engagement from all segments, particularly for segments that may have lower interest levels or face barriers to attending or participating. Tailoring experiences and offerings to attract and retain diverse segments can require innovative strategies.

Furthermore, achieving a balance between personalised experiences for different segments, while managing the scale of the event, can be a challenge (Funk *et al.*, 2008). Event, league, and competition organisers need to find ways to provide tailored experiences without compromising the overall event logistics or diluting the core event experience. Crafting effective communication and messaging that resonates with each segment can also be challenging. Ensuring that marketing messages are relevant, compelling, and targeted to specific segment interests can require careful planning and creativity.



Finally, challenges arise from allocating resources, budget, and time effectively across different segments, since it requires understanding the potential return on investment for each segment and making strategic decisions on where to allocate resources for maximum impact (Funk *et al.*, 2008). As such, evaluating the effectiveness of segmentation strategies and measuring the impact on event outcomes can be complex, but it is nonetheless required. Consequently, establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) and implementing mechanisms to gather feedback and data for analysis are essential, despite the difficulty in doing so, to ensure that appropriate and strategic efforts are made for customer segmentation.

Having thoroughly discussed the importance that understanding customer needs has for the service provider, and the usefulness of using segmentation as a tool of better understanding sport event, league, and competition customers, it is now also important to examine the other side of this coin, the role of the customer in the service delivery process. Again, let us appreciate that any sport event is a service and, as such, it is being delivered and consumed by its spectators who play a very active role in the service itself. This role will be examined below.

## Unit 2.8 The role of the customer in sport events

In a sport event, the customer plays a crucial role in the service delivery process. While the event, league, and competition organisers, as service providers, are responsible for planning and executing the event, the customer's participation and interaction are essential for a successful and enjoyable experience. So, let us examine the various aspects of their role.

First, fans are the primary attendees of sport events, showing up to watch and support their favourite teams or athletes. Their presence and engagement contribute to the atmosphere, energy, and excitement of the event (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006). Customers engage in various fan behaviours that are characteristic of sport events. This includes cheering, chanting, clapping, and participating in stadium traditions or rituals. Their active participation adds to the overall ambiance and creates a sense of camaraderie among fellow fans. At the same time, customers bring emotional investment to sport events, as they have personal connections and attachments to the teams, athletes, or sports being showcased. They experience a range of emotions such as joy, excitement, disappointment, and frustration throughout the event.

These emotions are important to create a good atmosphere in the sport venue, since it can directly impact on other fans who might find themselves enjoying an event more purely due to the behaviour of their peers (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006). After all, customers



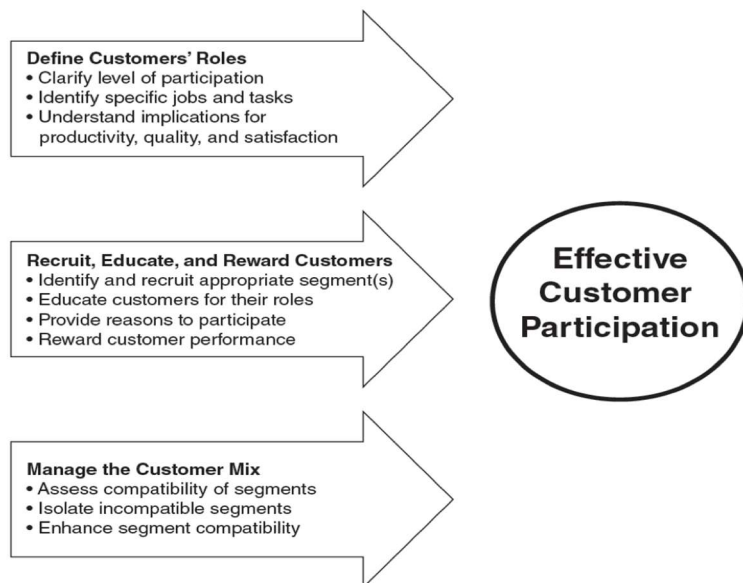
engage in various fan behaviours that are characteristic of sport events, such as cheering, chanting, clapping, and participating in stadium traditions or rituals. Spectators and consumers' active participation adds to the overall ambiance and creates a sense of camaraderie among fellow fans.

The lack of such a behaviour could therefore significantly impact on other fans/customers, who might not enjoy a sport event, league, or competition that is lacking such elements. Let us also not forget that sport events provide opportunities for social interaction among fans. Customers engage in conversations, connect with fellow fans, and form social bonds over shared interests and experiences, which in turn foster a sense of community and belonging among fans. All these elements are important aspects of sport events, which would not have been possible if the customer/spectator themselves did not initiate them (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006).

Another key role that customers play in sport event delivery is through their compliance with existing rules and regulations (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006). Sport event, league, or competition customers/spectators are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations set by the event organisers, such as following security procedures, respecting fellow attendees, and complying with any venue-specific guidelines. Compliance contributes to a safe and orderly environment for everyone, which, if disrupted, can lead to both serious health risks and to the overall satisfaction of their fellow customers/spectators.

Understanding the multifaceted role of sport event spectators as service customers therefore allows us to understand that sport event, league, or competition organisers could adopt appropriate strategies to achieve effective customer participation in their services. These are well summarised in the figure below and represent the practical managerial implications that sport event, league, and competition organisers should adopt moving forward (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006).

**Figure 9. Strategies for enhancing customer participation in services**



Source: Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006, p. 119.

## Summary

In this second module of the Managing Service Quality in Sport Events course, we focused on customer needs, their importance, and how to best understand them. For customer needs to be understood, and due to the complexity of capturing all customers, customer segmentation was introduced and discussed in detail in this module, incorporating both its theoretical and practical application in the world of sport. Finally, the role of the customer in service delivery was analysed, with particular emphasis on the strategies that sport events, leagues, and competitions could adopt to enhance customer participation in their services, also known as sport events.

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