

Module 3. Creating the Sports Marketing Plan

Within the role of the senior-level sports executive lies the responsibility to create a marketing mission. That mission is dependent upon the variables discussed in the previous text, but it also has to be supported by the functional tools created by the marketing mix within the marketing plan. The marketing mix was previously mentioned as being something that has been around since the days of traditional marketing, but it has evolved over time. During this evolution, sport and the factors within sport have changed as well. It is the role and responsibility of the senior sports executive to streamline this marketing process for an organization. This process must be done in unison with the mission, while remaining progressive in nature to create the adaptable culture that is needed for success within the industry of sport. After the creation of the sport marketing mix, the marketing plan will be created and implemented to advance the mission of the organization. Now we will take a deeper look into the marketing mix and how it applies to sport.

3.1 Marketing Mix: The 4 P's

Product

A product can be viewed upon in many ways when it comes to dealing with consumer demands. A product can be a tangible good, or an intangible service, being offered by an organization. Tangible products are items with a physical presence; they usually operate for a specific function and will have a shelf life of a finite amount of time. Tangible products also have their own unique physical existence. An intangible product is a good or service that does not have its own physical existence. This type of service is quite often offered through sport; it is usually an intangible experience in which the consumer has particular outcomes.

No matter whether it is a tangible product or an intangible product, the sports product is going to have similar characteristics and traits that products in other industries also possess. Every product has a life cycle in which it is consumed by the public. This life cycle is something that is very important when considering marketing, as the product is a direct link to your success. As discussed before, the sports executive must perform the necessary research to focus on what the changing environment is around the product, and how the consumer will adapt when it comes to the consummation of the product.



The third factor to consider when speaking about a product is the product mix. The sports executive must always be cognoscente of the product mix in order to do the necessary tasks to enhance the marketing plan of the organization. The tasks include (but are not limited to) increasing the awareness about the product, increasing the availability of the product, and developing different organizational resources for the product. These factors, as well as many others are something that the organization must consider when developing, maintaining, and maximizing their products.

Price

The price of the product has a simple definition, but it is very complex in the way it can be interpreted, especially when compared to ever-changing industry standards. The price is simply how much a consumer is willing to exchange for your product. Some sports executives believe the price, or margin based off of the price, is what determines the life cycle of a product. This same belief can also be carried over for that of an organization as well when discussing profitability. Often, organizations will adjust the price based on demand when it comes to a specific product. With these adjustments being made due to certain factors, the price is ultimately determined by the demand and willingness to be able to sustain a successful model of business. The sports organization should always set the price that complements the other areas of the marketing mix; it is something that will be a living, breathing point at which an organization can pivot over time. Adjusting the price can also have a significant impact on the market the organization is in as well. Something to be aware of for the sports executive is the many external factors that go into setting a price. Sometimes it is not the quality of the product that determines it, but rather the marketing plan and perceived customer value of the product.

Four basic pricing strategies that organizations utilize when setting the price for products which we will focus on are market premium pricing, skimming pricing, marketing penetrating pricing, and value pricing.

Market premium pricing is:

Practice in which a product, such as high-end perfumes, jewelry, clothing, or cars, is sold at a price higher than that of competing brands to give it snob appeal through an aura of 'exclusivity.' Also called image pricing or prestige pricing. ("Premium pricing", n.d., <https://bit.ly/2Y9BmzE>).

Market skimming pricing is:

An approach under which a producer sets a high price for a new high-end product (such as an expensive perfume) or a uniquely differentiated technical product (such as one-of-a-kind software or a very advanced

computer). Its objective is to obtain maximum revenue from the market before substitutes products appear. After that is accomplished, the producer can lower the price drastically to capture the low-end buyers and to thwart the copycat competitors. ("Market skimming pricing", n.d., <https://bit.ly/2Y9BQps>).

Market penetration pricing is:

A strategy adopted for quickly achieving a high volume of sales and deep market penetration of a new product. Under this approach, a product is widely promoted, and its introductory price is kept comparatively low. This strategy assumes that (1) the product does not have an identifiable price-market segment, (2) it has elasticity of demand (buyers are price sensitive), (3) the market is large enough to sustain relatively low profit margins, and (4) the competitors too will soon lower their prices. ("Market penetration pricing", n.d., <https://bit.ly/2Y6lrSw>).

Value pricing, or sometimes referred to as perceived value pricing is:

The valuation of good or service according to how much consumers are willing to pay for it, rather than upon its production and delivery costs. Using a perceived value pricing technique might be somewhat arbitrary, but it can greatly assist in the effective marketing of a product since it sets product pricing in line with its perceived value by potential buyers. ("Perceived value pricing", n.d., <https://bit.ly/2Yby4vJ>).

Promotion

The promotion of a product for a sports organization encompasses many different forms and has changed significantly over time. This is especially true when considering the use of self-promotion and some of the grass-roots marketing tactics used by organizations today. The mainstream examples of promotion are through the channels such as advertising, public relations, sales offers/discounts, as well as various forms of what is referred to as self-publicity promotions.

Advertising covers any communication that is part of a business. This can be in the form of traditional advertising such as radio, television, billboards, etcetera, but it can also be defined as something being done by an individual or group of individuals not associated with the organization.

Public relations often deal with promotion through such channels as press releases, subscription-based content, exhibitions, seminars, and organizational events. Public relations can be a vital part of integrating the sports product into a community. Within the role of the sports executive, it is especially important to have public relations as a key entity, as your marketing mix, because of the tie to some emotional bonds made between the consumer and the product. As seen later in the material, it is also beneficial to have similar or like-minded community organizations working together in unison during the campaign. This is done to maximize the achievement of the branding for each organization, as well as the profitability.

Sales offers and/or discounts are other forms of promotion and can be very beneficial when an organization is pushing out a new product. When the sports organization is new itself, or when it comes to realize that the short-term profitability is not as important as the long-term effect of getting its branding out into the public, sales offer and discounts become an essential tool for market penetration.

Self-publicity promotion is a different type of promotion that has been gaining more steam and effectiveness during recent years. The creation of multiple social media platforms and inexpensive ways to digitize your message while reaching mass audiences has become something more feasible during the coming age of technology. This form of promotion is particularly effective in certain demographics, but it cannot be as controlled as the other parts of promotion. Sometimes it works to the organization's benefit as the message that is being put out there about your product can be in exact alignment with the organization's thoughts and beliefs. Other times, the sports executive must do damage control because the message is off target or completely contradictory to what the organization is wanting to convey. It is because of this erratic behavior and unpredictability factor that grass-roots promotion cannot be counted on as being the sole place where one promotes certain products and services. Although this can be the least expensive and sometimes most reaching form of promotion, its downside can sometimes outweigh the benefits, especially when having variable factors that are impossible to control. This form of promotion has been used mainly by individuals or smaller organizations, but even with its challenges, it is also becoming more mainstream with senior sports organizations as a main source of promotion.

Place

The fourth and final element in the marketing mix is place, sometimes referred to as channel. Defining the place is as simple as having a point of contact, whether tangible or intangible, where consumers can consume your product at the easiest level of access. Many products and organizations have many places to consume their product. The role of the sports executive is to maximize these different places as separate channels in which



they can reach different demographics. The role of the marketing place is to serve not only as the easiest point of contact for that consumer, but also the easiest point of contact for the masses to consume at a level better than the competition. This is most effective when consumers desire to be consuming products which are intangible and therefore do not have any tangible space to take up. This allows for the sports executive to create a way in which the channel can be mobile in their delivery. When thinking of organizations and the products they want the public to consume, the organizations that are able to mass create and recreate that intangible item that satisfies the consumers' demand provide the most opportunity for growth. As regards tangible items, the delivery of the product is often not efficient because of the external factors surrounding it. This is a perfect example of why the place and/or distribution channel of the product is essential to the sustainable success of the product. A virtual place where one can consume virtual products with very little overhead is what the digitizing world is all about. With this distribution channel being so effective, it also allows for the product to be resold and consumed multiple times by multiple different consumers over a large platform. All of these reasons are why something tangible like a local newspaper or sport magazine has limited growth and distribution potential.

When focusing on the long-term profitability of the product, the sports executive must take into account that the digital versions of the product with the exact same content can have unlimited growth.

3.2 Marketing Mix: Evolution

Over time, the marketing mix has taken on various forms and alterations. In addition to the ever-changing factors that are the business world and the structure of an organization, the market in which consumers are making an exchange for products is changing. With this evolution, additions to the original marketing mix were created and different models evolved over time to be more fluent in nature and design. Philip Kotler, who is still widely regarded as one of the foremost leaders of thought and expertise when it pertains to such matters, still believes the 4 P's to be king and stated as such.

Q. Given how marketing has evolved over the last few decades, where do you think the Four P's model of marketing, the bedrock of marketing study, stands today?

A. The Four P's model of marketing is still king. Some people have added other P's.....Others have suggested using the Four A's (availability, affordability, acceptability, and awareness) as a prelude to using the Four P's. All of this is welcome, including the possibility of someone coming up with a radically different model for marketing planning. All contending models fight in a market place that will determine whether a new model

works better than the preceding one. (Mahajan, 2013, <http://goo.gl/xCmvTb>).

As seen in this dialogue by Kotler, different variations have proven to emerge to the marketing mix, especially in the explosion of the social media and internet age. The most popular model has the addition of 3 P's.

Physical Evidence

Being the 5th element to the marketing mix, this P (also known as *Packaging*, and what we sometimes refer to as the *first impression P*) is focused on the initial view the consumer has of the organization's product. A key factor to keep in mind is that sports organizations of all sorts are dealing with the Packaging element, including the ones with non-tangible products. Sometimes, when offering a product that is not able to be seen or touched, the initial reaction is to dismiss the packaging, but small tweaks and improvements in the product's packaging has a tremendous effect and leads to a wide ranging of reactions from consumers.

Process

A sports organization that truly succeeds in its consumers mind is always positioning itself in the eye of the consumer. How an organization is efficient and effective with its dealings with their consumer, especially within the services industry, sets them into a positive position within the consumer mind. Often, organizations promote being consumer friendly, but that is painting a broad brush of your consumer base since many different consumers are looking for different characteristics within the products they desire. Some consumers are looking for excellence, some are looking for a great value, some are looking familiarity; all of these are attributes pertaining to an organization and its position within the consumer mind. The sports executive has to be very cognoscente and aware of what position they want to be in the mind of consumers. Once you have decided that position, it is about your process and how you achieve that process. Some organizations often try to change their positioning to appeal to a different demographic within the market, and that often leads to confusion. A clear direction, attention to detail of the position in the market, and the processes that need to be implemented to get there, are the true keys for success.

People

This is what most refer to as the final P in the marketing mix, and it is also referred to as the Personnel of the organizational marketing mix. Very similar to the actors referred to in the internal factors' analysis, sports organizations must be completely aware and focused

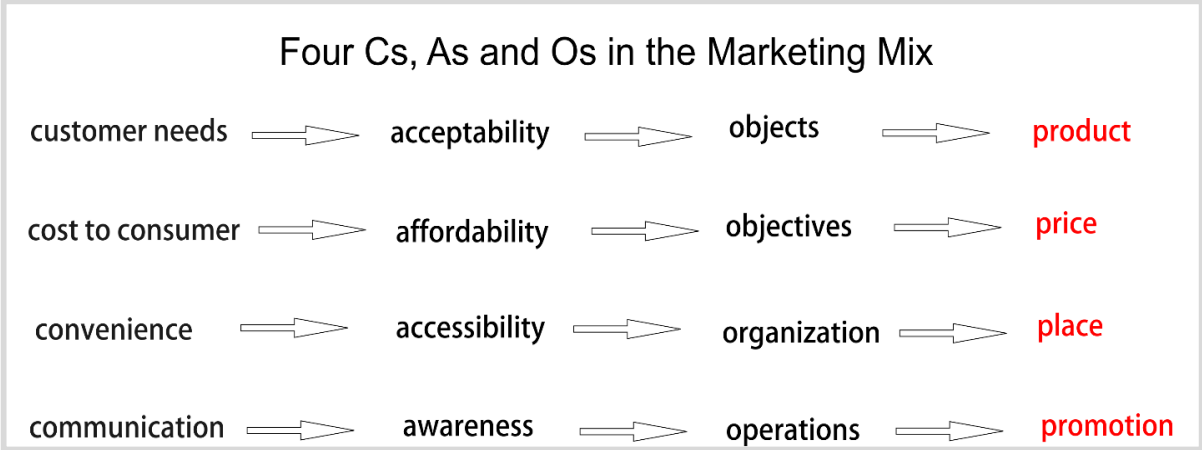


on every person inside and outside that are responsible for all external impressions of the organization. The ability to recruit, hire, lead, and maximize the right individuals for an organization is a key factor into what makes it marketable to your consumer. Organizations must develop the habit of who is going to carry out the tasks and responsibilities necessary for delivering the product. Even the best laid plans for many organizations have fallen flat because they did not have the right people to execute them, even if it involved a superior product.

To truly understand the marketing mix and its properties when applied to sport, it is a good exercise to look at two organizations (one with a tangible item and one with a non-tangible item) and list out the 7 P's for each. To achieve true understanding, it can also be beneficial to ask yourself what your personal 7 P's are. This is especially true because, as an employee, you are always marketing yourself as a product to organizations. It is a good recognition for self-branding and building a bigger market.

In addition to the three additional P's, Robert Lauterborn (1990) proposed amending them to the 4 C's which are shown in the diagram below to correspond to the 4 P's. Others have even implemented two other models and have aptly named them the 4 A's and 4 O's. As seen below, the factors within creating the sport marketing mix can vary depending on what the organization, sports executive, and their mission involve.

Figure 1: Four C's of Marketing



Source: White & White, 2013, <http://goo.gl/cYQ0Vn>

All the elements and models discussed have shown the evolution of the market that every organization is in. The marketing platforms and models must be as agile as the organizations and products they are adapted to. As was mentioned earlier in the text, Coca-Cola, largely recognized as one of the world leaders in marketing and advertising, has remained on top for more than a century. It is because of their ever-changing adaptability, overall global vision, and solid foundation that the organization has been one of the leaders and mainstays in marketing for the past 100 years. The environment in sport is even faster and more liquid than most other industries out there. This forces



organizations to be able to be nimble and adapt strong marketing plans to support their overall marketing mission. To be adaptable, the sports executive must first plot out the marketing plan.

3.3 Writing the Marketing Plan

Writing the marketing plan is the culmination of taking all the methods, tools, and guidelines that a sports executive has and placing them into a digestible format with a specific outcome. Developing the specific marketing plan is something that can be done by an individual within an organization, but it is often the work of a team; it is because of this that the senior-level sports executive can assign multiple different marketing plans to multiple departments at once. There could be a marketing plan created for joining community partners to produce sponsorships. Another example of a popular marketing plan in sports organizations today can be set on a tangible product, such as selling more team jerseys, increasing concession sales, or maximizing memorabilia sales. These are examples of marketing plans that are specific to that organization and can be changed on an annual or semiannual basis. Marketing plans consist of the tools mentioned previously and should be supported by the data collected by the sports organization. Below is a sample marketing plan created for the sale of tickets to an intangible product, but also included peripheral items which are tangible products. This is an example of maximizing crossover product revenue, a concept that is often taken advantage of by sports organizations and sports executives. How to maximize the effectiveness of one marketing plan while supporting another one is always something the successful sport executive considers.

3.4 FC Cincinnati - Sample Marketing Plan

Executive summary

The following marketing plan was designed for the usage of FC Cincinnati with the intention of increasing pre-sale ticket sales for individuals within the greater Cincinnati area that fit within the specified 18-29 age demographic. The summary includes a plan for targeting both membership-based Greek organizations at local colleges and universities, as well as Young Professionals organizations in the region. Through a unique consignment program catered to both Greek and Young Professionals organizations, FC Cincinnati can increase their pre-sale tickets sales within the 18-29 age groups.

Our marketing plan consists of eight total events over the course of FC Cincinnati's regular season. Four of our events are designed for college Greek organizations, and four of our events are designed for Young Professionals organizations. The events for the Greek organizations will consist of a "College Night" theme. We will sell reduced-price tickets to

several college organizations through a consignment program. Tickets sold to these organizations will be reduced with the option of them raising the ticket price to sell internally. The difference between FC Cincinnati's sale price and the organization's sale price will be used as a rebate to the organization, thus incentivizing the sale of large quantities of tickets to raise money for the organization.

The same consignment program will be utilized for the four Young Professionals events that will take place at Nippert Stadium, the current the home of FC Cincinnati. The Young Professionals organizations will be divided into four categories based on the area of specialization for each group: social, professional, political, and volunteer. It will be our intention to target specific Young Professionals (YP) organizations based on their organization's classification.

All eight events will take place during the week as opposed to the weekend when ticket prices are at premium rates. We intend to sell tickets to the college organizations at a lesser rate than the Young Professionals organizations due to the substantial variance in discretionary income between the two groups. Tickets for the college organizations will be in upper level sections and tickets for the Young Professionals will be Club tickets. We intend to offset some costs by inviting some of our corporate sponsors to contribute products or finances for the events.

The consignment program targeting college Greek organizations and Young Professionals organizations in greater Cincinnati has a high potential to raise pre-sale ticket sales for FC Cincinnati home games. This marketing plan will cover some of the more exact details for actualizing this promotion. Ultimately, by outreaching to college and Young Professionals organizations in the area, FC Cincinnati can increase their exposure and ticket sales within the 18-29 age demographic.

Internal Factors

Organization Background

FC Cincinnati is a soccer club based in Cincinnati, Ohio that plays in the Eastern Conference of Major League Soccer (MLS). The team succeeded the lower-division team of the same name and was announced on May 29, 2018, when MLS awarded an expansion franchise to Cincinnati. The team began MLS play on March 2, 2019 with its first match against Seattle Sounders FC. The club's ownership group is led by Carl H. Lindner III, with Jeff Berding serving as president and general manager. ("FC Cincinnati", 2020)

The owners of the former USL club began negotiations with Major League Soccer over a potential expansion franchise in early 2016, and Cincinnati was announced as one of ten cities that had expressed interest in the slots for teams 25 to 28. MLS Commissioner Don Garber visited Cincinnati in December 2016 to tour Nippert Stadium and meet with city and



club officials, complimenting the city and its fans. ("FC Cincinnati", 2020) Then, as previously mentioned, on May 29, 2018 FC Cincinnati was announced as the next Major League Soccer expansion franchise with play beginning in the 2019 season.

Products

FC Cincinnati is in the business of providing professional entertainment to consumers through the avenue of sport. Additionally, FC Cincinnati produces merchandise/fan apparel and sells concessions at all home contests.

External Factors

Markets

FC Cincinnati is in the professional sports and entertainment businesses. The organization is a for-profit company within the greater umbrella of Major League Soccer. FC Cincinnati strives to provide high-quality professional soccer for fans to ensure their competitiveness within the MLS.

Competitive environment

FC Cincinnati competes nationally within the MLS market. All 24 teams strive for fan and media supremacy. More specifically, FC Cincinnati competes regionally within the MLS with other teams such as Columbus Crew SC, Atlanta United FC, and the Chicago Fire. Further, other competitors within FC Cincinnati's market stem from other local Cincinnati professional and collegiate teams such as the Cincinnati Bengals, the University of Cincinnati Bearcats (soccer, football and basketball), the Cincinnati Reds and the Cincinnati Cyclones.

Economic environment

To match the good performance of the economic environment across the United States, which has been positive over the past several years, there are positive economic factors that should be considered pertaining to Cincinnati's economy as well. FC Cincinnati has a fairly strong economic environment considering the fact that Cincinnati is a mid-sized United States' city. Metropolitan Cincinnati has the twenty-eighth largest economy in the United States and the seventh largest in the Midwest, after Chicago, Minneapolis, Detroit, St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Cleveland. It currently has the fastest-growing Midwestern economic capital based on percentages. Cincinnati has a strong economic environment with industries including wholesale and retail trade, education and health services, insurance and finance, and manufacturing (Advameg, n.d.). Approximately 2.2 million people live and work within 50 miles of downtown Cincinnati. Additionally, Cincinnati adds over 100,000 young professionals to the workforce each year (Advameg, n.d.). The median household income within the Cincinnati metropolitan area was \$61,653 (Department of Numbers, n.d.). The unemployment rate in Cincinnati according to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates 3.6%, which is lower than the national



average (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). According to the Ohio Department of Development, Cincinnati is considered a city with great potential for economic expansion.

Demographic environment

The demographic environment for FC Cincinnati is comprised of several factors. According to the 2010 Census, 48.1% of the population is Caucasian and 44.6% of the population is African American. Other races that make up small percentages of the population include Asian Americans, Native Hawaiian's or Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics or Latinos. There are a slightly higher percentage of females than males within greater Cincinnati. Additionally, 12.9% of the city's population is comprised of people from ages 18 to 24 (Census 2010).

Social and cultural environment

The culture within greater Cincinnati reflects many ties to Germany immigrants during the late 1800s and early 1900s. The German influence is reflected in food, entertainment, and the arts in Cincinnati. More specifically, Cincinnati is recognized as a hub for music and the arts. For example, the 2012 World Choir Games took place in Cincinnati. Cincinnati has several historical museums and visual and performing arts venues, such as the American Classical Music Hall of Fame, the Aronoff Center for the Arts, the Carnegie Visual and Performing Arts Center, and the Freedom Center.

Political and legal environment

Currently, FC Cincinnati does not have any significant political or legal issues that could hinder the ability of the club to sell tickets or attract fans.

Technological environment

FC Cincinnati has substantial technological resources that can be utilized to connect with consumers. Mainly social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook provide an ideal means to connect with consumers and, more specifically, consumers that fit within the targeted age demographic of 18-29 year olds. FC Cincinnati also utilizes a user-friendly website to entice and connect with consumers in greater Cincinnati.

SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Financially strong, managerially adept hands on ownership.
- Extensive and high quality marketing staff.
- Currently building new fan-friendly stadium with multiple specialized revenue generating areas.
- Large corporate base in region.



- Extensive geographic reach of fan base.
- Recent and current on-field success.
- Young superstar players.
- Recently most successful professional franchise in region.
- Soccer knowledgeable fan base.

Weaknesses

- Small market club: lower radio and television broadcasting rights potential.
- Fan base: very traditional and not energized by promotions and activation.
- Stadium location: difficult access and lack of parking.
- Certain MLS rules preventing product/team differentiation.
- Absence of effective marketing of potential space usage by third parties.

Opportunities

- Increased residential real estate development near new stadium.
- Establish user generated content (UGC) sites within stadium –two-way communication.
- QR codes on back of seats that link to team website.
- Install cellphone charging stations in distinct marketing locations within stadium.
- Generate buzz through the use of social photo-sharing website.
- Focus on real-time interactions such as Twitter with large ticket groups.
- Maximize marketing of ticket specials via the use of new technologies.
- Ensure that new marketing platforms are integrated into sponsorship packages.
- Market additional features other than seat location for high end seating club seats.
- Increase marketing to corporate customers of range of meeting and entertainment spaces.
- Create a mobile phone optimized facility—live on-line chats.
- Develop specialized apps for saleable items or locations.
- Create higher tech commercials that appeal to Generation Y and millennial audience.
- Develop referral plans or linked communications between certain groups.
- Create opportunities for face time with people who can guide toward purchase of a product.
- Sponsor college fairs, wedding/bridal shows and home buying advising before a game.
- Give them a look behind the scenes —provide pre-game tours with ticket purchase.
- Offer specific content targeted specifically at millennials.



Threats

- Weather: cold, heat and rain.
- Millennials disfavor with sports.
- Increased competition for entertainment dollars.
- More real-time decision making about attendance to events.
- Possible economy and business downturns.
- Total package costs: parking, tickets and food increasing out of range for some families and young adults.

Marketing objective

Our marketing objective is to increase the game-day attendance rates of individuals between the ages of 18 and 29 by providing incentives to Young Professionals organizations and Greek organizations in greater Cincinnati.

Marketing strategies

Target market

Our target market includes the YP groups in the Cincinnati area as well as the different Greek organizations from local colleges and universities.

Product

We anticipate hosting a series (4 each) of Networking and College Nights for certain FC Cincinnati home games during the week when attendance and tickets are not at a premium. Our product is viewed as a two-pronged benefit for our patrons for both the YP groups as well as the college organizations. For the YP groups we will be offering a "Networking Night" where they will have the opportunity to meet and interact with other young professionals in the Greater Cincinnati while attending an FC Cincinnati game. This will help them expand their professional network in which they will create advancement and expansion opportunities. It will also provide the group with a medium for exposing themselves to advance their cause and possibly gain new support and membership. The other product we will provide is a rebate to each group for the individual tickets they sell. Money derived from tickets sold can be put back into their organization. This will provide them with extra incentive to sell the tickets and fully engage in the event. Our college night will be done in a similar fashion, but we will have the college nights in a different section and at a lower price point realizing their discretionary income levels are different. We will allow for members of these groups to have access to special seating and provide a group atmosphere that is conducive to the potential expansion of different individuals.



Price

We plan to charge between \$20-\$45 per ticket. This price includes the ticket to the game as well as “all you can eat” that you receive in both sections. For the YP group, we will be offering tickets in the Club section, so they have access to special amenities and air conditioning because they will be presumably in professional attire. We will charge them \$40 per ticket that they will sell for \$45 to their members and therefore receiving a \$5 rebate for every ticket they sell. This can be accomplished because the demand for tickets during the week is not as high, and FC Cincinnati already offers up to 50% off on some group discounts over 100; we plan to have around 400-500 people for each YP night. For the college group, we will be offering them tickets in the “all you can eat” sections of the upper level. We will sell these tickets for \$15 to the organizations, which will sell them to their members for \$20. This will create a lower, more reasonable price point for college students and still give their organizations a \$5 rebate for every ticket sold, which serves a great fundraising opportunity. We plan to get local sponsors to help defer the cost as well (Kroger, Graeter’s, etc.), which will give these companies exposure to a key market at a discounted price.

Promotion

We will contact the local YP and Greek organizations in the area by having a few different meet and greet sessions with the leaders of these organizations at a pre-arranged time set in the future. During this session, we will offer them a consignment option and/or web option to distribute the tickets. After these sessions, we will go live with the web portal and push sales through various forms of social media. These efforts will include creating a Facebook page of “FCCincinnatiNetworkingNight” and subscribing to all the groups in various Facebook pages to create constant interaction and awareness. We will also have a #Networkingnight attached to a Twitter account we create, where people can track and follow leading up to and during these events. We will also do more traditional ways of marketing by sending out email blasts on a biweekly basis and having some advertising on the FC Cincinnati website. Inside this web portal, we will give each group leaders access to log in and see a report of how many tickets are being purchased by their group and how much money is being raised. We believe this will provide a sense of awareness which keeps the groups engaged, and hopefully stir up a sense of competition among the groups, which will drive ticket sales. We will also send out a weekly report to each group leader with this information once again keeping them engaged and aware of the events status. This will act as incentive for the different organizations to promote the event.

Distribution/place

We will sell our promotion online and through the lead contacts of the different groups. The web option, which we will strongly push and see more success in because of the technical knowledge and preferences of this age group, will be an online web ordering portal. This portal will be allowed to be accessed by them entering their group or organization’s code, and then can order the tickets. The tickets can be sent to them



through email or printed out immediately. The consignment option will be done by physically handing them tickets and giving them a deadline in which they must sell them by or be returned to us. This is a secondary option that will we try to steer them away from, but it will be available if they choose.

Packaging

The packaging of the product will come in different forms depending on the distribution place for the consumer. If purchased online, the consumer will receive the product electronically and digitally. The consumer will have the option to print the tickets at home following along with normal printing procedure, and there will be a special YP watermark on the ticket(s). If delivered digitally, via mobile phone or device, the tickets will have special advertising behind the ticket(s). This is done to stay consistent with the message of promoting the event as well as branding it with the community partners.

Process/position

FC Cincinnati has placed itself favorably in the mind of consumers by having a recent tradition of winning and establishing ties within the community. FC Cincinnati has established a FC Cincinnati foundation, which has donated resources in the tangible and non-tangible sense, to all demographics and markets laid out in the mission of the community fund. Establishing this tie within the community, as well as being a corporate partner with many of the leading companies in the area, show the commitment FC Cincinnati has to a favorable position in the minds of most consumers.

People

FC Cincinnati employees who will be handling the majority of the project will be the outside sales representatives, ticket operations department, and community marketing coordinators. As with every department of the organization, these departments are expected to perform the duties necessary to the job to the level of excellence which is expected in everything that we do. The organization prides itself on hiring, retaining, and maximizing the best talent for every department. The plan is within the reasonable expectations for each member of the team and will be executed with precision in mind.

Additional Marketing Mix Notes

- There are over 60 Young Professional (YP) groups in the Cincinnati area.
 - Many of these groups are free to join—we might want to appeal to those that cost (they will most likely be more inclined to participate).
- The number of members varies per group.
- Most of the groups are divided into (we will want to invite accordingly)
 - social,
 - professional,
 - political, and
 - volunteer.

- The Greek organizations have very high participation rates.
 - Having a web option or providing tickets up front is a MUST with these groups.

Timeline of Events

January 2019

- Begin outreach to local Greek and YP organizations in greater Cincinnati to discuss the potential of hosting an event during the upcoming FC Cincinnati season. Representatives (e.g., interns) from FC Cincinnati will visit various YP and Greek organizations to discuss the program.

March 2019

- Target Greek organizations specifically due to them nearing the conclusion of their academic year. Host the first College Night for Greek organizations near the end of April. This event could also be endorsed as an end-of-the-year Greek social event.

May 2019

- Host the first YP Networking Night. During the first Networking Night we will host specifically the social YP organizations.

June 2019

- Host second College Night and second YP Networking Night. The second Networking Night will target professional YP organizations.

July 2019

- Host the third Networking Night for political YP organizations.

August 2019

- Host the third College Night at the end of August. This event will be used as a welcome back event for local Greek organizations near the end of August.

September 2019

- Host final Networking Night for volunteer YP organizations. We will also host the final College Night and try to couple this with a pledge event for local Greek organizations near the end of September.

End of marketing plan

Implementation and evaluation

Once your sports organization has established the marketing plan, it is the responsibility of the sports executive to lead the implementation of it. As discussed previously in the text,



it is only with precise execution and thorough follow-up that a sports organization will succeed. When implementing the marketing plan, some guidelines to follow during the implementation process are as follows:

- Stick to deadlines, unless there is a clear need for extensions/changes.
- Be adaptable to the changes within the market and be ready to respond quickly.
- Hold staff/departments accountable by setting specific standards that coincide with your SMART goals.
- Preset key indicators of what success looks like.
- Take notes/lessons along the way for new marketing missions.
- Believe in the process.

These guidelines will be different for each sports organization and sports executive, but the implementation and execution of the marketing plan must be approached with the same vigor and precision as the work to prepare it. Even the best organizations within sport have to be diligent in their implementation, with the money and resources put into marketing campaigns and missions.

Another factor to consider during the implementation phase is the outside partners of the organization and what part they may play. Teaming up with your community partners during the implementation is something that should be thought of during the planning process; however, having the opportunities to profit on an exceptional marketing campaign is something the seasoned sports executive will do. For example, during the marketing plan to increase ticket sales referenced previously, a community organization with a similar objective of appealing to a younger demographic could join as a partner. This could take on many forms by that organization providing extra money for sponsorship, providing additional exposure to consumers, or possibly even providing their consumer market database information. This is just one example in a long line of many that have resulted from successful marketing plans being implemented. Keeping in mind the mission of your organization and the position you would like to stay in within the mind of the consumer is a key factor when deciding to partner up with an outside organization; if a mutually beneficial relationship can coexist, the marketing plan has already produced another outside benefit.

Whether or not those peripheral benefits come about should not determine the true success when it comes to marketing plans. The success of a marketing plan should be evaluated on key factors preset before implementation. Some of these additional key indicators include market penetration, Return on Investment (ROI), gross revenue, and gross participation, along with many others. Keeping these key indicators in mind and having checkpoints along the way are all part of the evaluation process. The senior sports executive does not have knee-jerk reactions to marketing plans established within a good process. However, trends need to be studied and data needs to be collected to help with

additional marketing ventures in the future. Once the plan is written, implemented, and evaluated, it can now be considered a completed venture. Although marketing missions are never truly done for a successful organization, marketing plans have a life cycle like a product. Recognizing this life cycle and effectively managing the process as a whole is a key factor in success.



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