Sport brand management

Sport organization brands are visible everywhere you look within the world economy. Major sport brands are looked upon as being market makers not only for the sport in which they are involved in, but also for outside industries as well. Nike, Football Club Barcelona, and the Olympics are some of the most widely recognized brands in the world. Large agency organizations, such as CAA (Creative Artists Agency) and IMG (International Management Group), have detailed policies to manage the use of their clients, some of which are athletes, as well as their names and logos to control their brand. Even non-profit entities such as intercollegiate athletic programs and governmental sport federations have branding experts that are responsible for the development and management of their brand in the public eye. Developing and maintaining a successful brand is a key factor in an organization's financial health as well as its success when compared to its competitors. In this module, we will first look at why branding is important, how to build and maintain a brand, and how to align that brand with the organizational partners.

1.1 Branding essentials

What is your personal brand? How important is it to you and to what you do on an everyday basis? These questions are rhetorical in nature because there is no solid answer that can be truly given by the individual itself about their own personal brand. The reason for this is because you can try to manage your brand, but it is decided by those around you, not yourself. This is also true when you are thinking about the brand of your sport organization. The brand is framed and built by the organization, but it is ultimately decided by the consumer. A brand is simply put as the consumers' feeling about a product, service, or organization. We will dive into how to build and manage a brand later, but it is always important of the sport executive to remember that the brand is not what you say it is; it is what the consumer says it is.

Some organizations and sport executives ask themselves why it is important to have a brand, or if it is worth spending money to create and manage a brand. Branding is especially important in this day and age because of very key and important societal factors. These factors are accessibility, familiarity, and competition. Accessibility is a key because the consumer is now busier than ever before. The consumer is surrounded by choices and they do not have the time to investigate each one of these choices with their busy schedules. Having an exceptional brand within your sport organization makes it accessible for consumers to choose. Familiarity is another factor that plays into the success of sport organizations, because consumers are creatures of habit and tend

to engage in exchanges of business because of trust. They trust that the products they are getting are what they want because of the previously-held feeling they have about the product itself and/or its organization. The third factor of why branding is so important is because of the competition out there within the sport industry, as well as outside of the industry, for the consumers' discretionary income. Many organizations within sport have similar qualities and features in today's marketplace. The sport executive and organizations' branding is often times what decides where the consumer will go to consume products.

1.2 Brand elements

A brand can be made up of many different elements. It is important to note that within sport, they are often determined by internal and external factors. The brand for your sport organization is made up of:

- Organizational actors.
- Personalities.
- Catchphrases.
- Promises/ agreements.
- Logos.
- Iconic names.

When considering these factors, a sport organization must establish criteria for choosing its brand. To establish the proper position within the mind of the consumer, as well as be progressive in nature, the criteria for choosing a brand should answer the following questions.

Is the brand:

- Serving a purpose?
- Likable by the consumer?
- Memorable to the consumer?
- Adaptable in nature?
- Unique?
- Transferable?

1.3 Brand benefits

Brands have purposes that are both beneficial for consumers and for organizations alike. These purposes are especially important for the sport executive to be cognizant of while managing the brand process, when building a brand, and while maintaining it in the eyes of the consumer.

The first purpose of the brand for the consumer is that it is used as a source for an exchange of business. As mentioned before, this allows the consumer to easily make a purchase decision based on the brand that most easily satisfies their needs and/or wants. The second purpose for the consumer is the small amount of risk and predictability a brand provides. Branding means the consumer has less apprehension when engaging in an exchange of business because of the trust they have built up with the brand. The third purpose is the decreasing time value of investigation the consumer must have when engaging in an exchange of goods. Saving time and saving money are something consumers are looking to do on an everyday basis. Providing a brand that accomplishes both of these desires creates a lifetime of loyalty if properly stewarded over time. The fourth purpose a brand serves the consumer is to identify with quality and service. By having a certain symbol of your brand, you are already increasing the value within the eyes of the consumer. This is especially important for sport organizations, as it provides easier access and transferability from one consumer to the next if excellence is part of their brand within the mind of the consumer.

Along with serving purposes for the consumer, a brand provides tremendous benefit for the sport executive and organization as well. The first purpose it serves for the organization is that it provides a competitive advantage within its industry. In the world of sport, this is evident by the concept of *jumping on the bandwagon*. With this concept, an organization attracts new consumers just by having a recognizable brand from their excellence established within their brand. The second purpose a brand offers an organization is a blanket of protection to its goods or services that it offers. Although this is often thought of as copyrights, sport organizations must realize the value of their entities, and that by having a brand, they are protecting their individual assets. This will also provide protection within the growth of a sport organization, as more teams and athletes are profiting from copyrighted and trademarked phrases that are instantaneously popular among the consumer. The third purpose of a brand for the organization is that it ensures the basis of satisfaction within the consumer mindset when consuming a product. A consumer has an initial thought when going into an exchange of business with a brand. Having this be a positive starting point because of the brand means that the organization is more likely to deliver in the mind of the consumer, providing another launch point for the next exchange in the future. An example of this is when a corporate sponsor has seen an increase in business since the first deal was made, and they now have a positive feeling when going into discussion of the next sponsorship deal. Even if something within the implementation of the second deal does not go as planned initially, the organization (and its brand within the mind of the consumer) has built up a trust bank which it draws from. This allows it to continue to have positive feelings going forward. The last purpose a brand serves for the organization that we will focus on is utilizing the brand as a way of monetizing the brand.

Although this is somewhat of a combination of the first three purposes, an organization needs to profit on the brand in order for it to be successful. A sport executive must utilize every revenue stream to maximize the profit of his/her organization. Utilizing the brand can open unlimited revenue streams. Most sport organizations have similarities, and therefore they have similar revenue streams. It is the sport executives and organizations that open up additional revenue streams that sets them apart from the competitors to make themselves a true industry leader.

1.4 Brand management

Brand management is a process that truly never ends for an organization. As mentioned before, it is something that evolves over time and has to be adaptable to certain events within the organization's stages of growth. Brand management consists of certain steps that are involved in the process of the overall branding of an organization. As a sport executive, one must remember that this process is not one that ends; this process is something that will be constantly refined to the industry and organization that the sport executive works within. Brand management is simply put as the process of creating, maintaining, and maximizing a brand. The brand management process that is implemented by an organization can ensure that it creates and maintains a successful brand that is not dependent upon one singular factor of branding. Even if one of the actors within the organization changes, or there is a change within the industry, a solid brand management process will see an organization not only survive, but rather thrive during its lifetime. There are four steps in the brand management process:

- Creating the Brand.
- Implementing the Brand.
- Measuring brand performance.
- Growing the brand.

Creating a brand

As stated before, a truly identifiable and positively-thought-of brand is one of the most valuable assets a sport organization can possess. In the mind of the everyday consumer, it is a much easier transition to consume products from a brand they are familiar with. This provides convenience for the consumer rather than explore outside of the familiarity circle to consume similar products from a differing brand. This can be very valuable to the sport executive as they can leverage the emotional connection, and behaviors tied to that emotional connection, to gain an advantage in a previously unexplored market. It can also be used by the sport executive to expand its market share in an already

saturated market. In order to build a successful brand, the sport executive must take into consideration a lot of the internal and external factors within the sport industry, as well as socio-economic factors existing in business today. Following the steps listed below to build a brand or rebrand an organization will be the first step in establishing success through branding. These are the steps to build a brand:

1) Identify the target audience,
2) create a brand mission statement;
3) research competing brands;
4) determine what benefits your brand will provide for the consumer;
5) design the creative aspects of the brand;
6) create your brand message and pitch;
7) highlight your brand;
8) implement your brand into business; and
9) be consistent and diligent with your brand.

Identify your target audience – Identifying the target audience for some organizations within sport is thought to be easy because there are some familiar and local ties to sport. For example, the New York Knicks of the NBA (National Basketball Association) could easily say they are targeting people within 25 miles of New York City who are avid sports fans. This is a very vague approach when it comes to branding, as it does not serve the purpose of truly creating a brand in a global fashion. Every brand must be created with the idea of what can work initially, but also be sustainable over time when the organization grows. Continuing with the same example, the New York Knicks could create a brand that worked great within their market segment of avid sports fans that live within 25 miles of New York City, but perhaps that brand did not work outside of New York. Meanwhile, the Brooklyn Nets, also a member of the NBA, created a much more global-friendly brand while still being specific. The Brooklyn Nets' target audience was to engage males 25-55 years old who have a passion for basketball and are into fitness as an outside activity. Although the market audience for the Nets may seem more specific, it actually has a broader reach. It does not have any local restrictions, and in turn, it can become a worldwide message that is being carried form one consumer to another. Determining your target audience for your brand should be looked at differently than a target audience for a marketing plan. Although they seem similar in nature, it is the role of the sport executive to have a global view of what can work on a larger level.

Create a brand mission statement – The mission statement for an organization within sport is more than just winning a few matches or championships. Also, the organizational mission statement can be seen as the reason for the organization performing business in the industry they are in, as well as the organization's reason for existing. The brand

mission statement should be in line with the organization's mission statement. It should provide a clear direction of what the organization is trying to accomplish, and what their reason is for engaging with the consumer. For example, Harvard Athletics has a specific mission that goes well beyond what is played out on the field, court, or track. By reading the mission statements below, you can see what type of brand Harvard has built. You are also able to see what brand they are continuing to manage within their athletics program and their institution as well.

> Harvard Athletics Mission Statement - *Education through Athletics*
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> Athletic participation helps our students grow, learn, and enjoy themselves while they use and develop their personal, physical, and intellectual skills. Harvard values the lessons that have long been taught by athletic participation: the pursuit of excellence through personal development and teamwork, ethical and responsible behavior on the field and off, adherence to the spirit of rules as well as to their letter, leadership and strength of character, and sportsmanship – respect for one's opponents, acceptance of victory with humility, and acknowledgement of defeat with grace. In teaching these lessons to its students, Harvard instills habits which will lead students to better and healthier lives. While winning is not an end in itself, we believe that the efforts by our intercollegiate athletes to be their best will lead them to succeed throughout their lives.
>
> *Build Community and Pride in Harvard*
> Athletics at Harvard builds community through the engagement of students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and creates a portal through which neighboring communities can enjoy the Harvard experience. We all take pride in knowing that our coaches are educators and our athletes are true representatives of Harvard's student body – Harvard athletes are admitted through the same process, receive the same academic support, and are held to the same standards as every other Harvard student. Successful athletic teams generate unique excitement across the campus and community, help strengthen bonds among the various arms of our university, build collegiate loyalty in a healthy manner, and give our community members yet another reason to be proud to represent Harvard. (Harvard University, 2014, https://goo.gl/Brk0TA).

Research competing brands – When building a brand for your sport organization, or when rebranding your organization, you have to be cognizant of what the competing organizations around you are doing in order to gauge the feelings of the consumer. This process is very similar to researching the external factors within a SWOT (strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis when building a marketing plan. The SWOT analysis is aimed at aligning what strengths and weaknesses the organization has compared to others, along with its industry's opportunities and threats. This serves as a commonly-used tool for sport organizations to identify what *strengths* and *opportunities* to capitalize on, and what *weakness* and *threats* need to be controlled or contained. The difference when researching for a brand, as compared to the marketing plan, is that it is more global focused with a larger outlook on the different organizations. An example would be when the NBA was looking to expand internationally. The NBA would look at the branding of the international sport organizations that were competing with abroad and not necessarily with the monster organization, the NFL (National Football League), that dominates the market within the USA. By looking at sport organizations like the Premier League and La Liga, the NBA had a better idea of what branding they needed to use, and what works for an international branding focus. Keeping in mind who your true competitors are is essential for the sport executive when determining their brand and mission.

Determine what benefits your brand will offer the consumer – By establishing your brand mission statement, the sport organization defines why it exists. By determining what benefits your brand will offer the consumer, you are specifying what your mission statement is and the assigned tangible or intangible benefits to it. Within the industry of sport, each different organization has a different scale of services and goods it can offer. Determining specifically what scale your organization is going to operate on, and what can be provided, is key for managing expectations. Part of this process is figuring out what qualities and benefits make your organization unique. Within sport, this may not seem as easy since a lot of similarities exist within teams that play in the same league and/or same sport. When looking at it with more focus, the sport executive can think back to the process in which it provides services, and the channels those services are offered through. Since the brand target audience was already defined, you can focus specifically on why your consumer should choose you over the competitors. A good exercise now would be to stop and think about what exactly makes you different to your consumers than some of your competitors within your league, division, industry, etc. The assets you are thinking about are ways in which you can set yourself apart from others.

Design the creative aspects of the brand – The creative aspects of the brand are usually the first things the consumer thinks about when hearing the word brand. So often the consumer knows an organization by the logo, tagline, or creative pieces of art. Often, this is thought of being the key factor in building your brand, as companies have spent millions on finding the next *Jumpman* logo or tagline like *JUST DO IT*, both of which are properties of Nike. The truth behind the matter is that although these are key pieces to Nike's brand, they are not the key

reasons of why Nike has been successful over the years. With that being said, the creative aspect of the brand is something that is exceptionally important in the first impression phase of the consumer buying process. The successful sport organization should be willing to invest heavily into creating an identity and brand design that is exceptional, but they must realize that this is only part of the puzzle and it is not the only piece.

Create your brand message and pitch – Your message is going to be dependent upon the mission, consumer market, and the competition within your industry of sport. Your brand message can come off in many different ways in the eyes of the consumer and should resonate with them as a personal message. For example, the brand message of NBA Cares Community Assist Award is "Making an assist in the community" (NBA Media Ventures, LLC. 2016, https://goo.gl/OmxAQf). This is something that is very consumable to the avid NBA consumer because of the reference to terminology with the game of basketball: making an *assist* as well as tying into the universal message of *community*. In this example, the NBA has shown that it is relating to those within the sport as well as to a global reach. The pitch that your sport organization can make is also called an *elevator pitch* in the world of business and non profits. The basic premise is to determine a very succinct statement that would allow you to explain your mission and goals as an organization in the time it takes to ride in an elevator. To describe the branding of the NBA Cares Community Assist Award, the pitch is listed as

> Every month, the NBA chooses one player from across the league for the NBA Cares Community Assist Award presented by Kaiser Permanente. The award honors the NBA player who best reflects the passion that the league and its players have for giving back to their communities. This player is recognized for his outstanding efforts in the community and for his ongoing philanthropic and charitable work! (NBA Media Ventures, LLC. 2016, https://goo.gl/OmxAQf).

By having both a message and pitch, the NBA has shown that it can adapt the idea of the brand message and pitch not only to its organization as a whole, but also to specific programs within a charitable division of its organization. A good exercise for the sport executive to do in relation to its own company is to think of both the message and pitch that they would be able to deliver right now in the finite amount of time that an elevator ride would be. It must be succinct, to the point, and intriguing enough for consumers/ partners to want to consume more.

Highlighting your brand – Once the brand is internally established, it is essential for the sport organization to highlight it at every chance it has and be able to show its impact. It can be accomplished with simple mentions of the brand in conversation. This is also done by including it in all forms of communication and by showing its impact after implementation. To have an exceptional brand is not just within the details of internally creating something exceptional, but also being able to share it with the world as much as possible. This is done by showing impact in the form of *telling your story* through traditional and non-traditional outlets. Highlighting your brand is also shown through building partnerships while doing collaborative projects that mutually benefit each organization. As shown below, this can be done by long-time partners for a new joint venture in which both will benefit from building a new brand for a new initiative:

> Longtime NFL partner Gatorade, part of the PepsiCo company, has launched a new League of Captains comic-themed campaign. The online comics will feature five football "superheroes": Cam Newton of the Carolina Panthers as The Blender, JJ Watt of the Houston Texans as MegaWatt, Peyton Manning of the Denver Broncos as The Sheriff, the New York Giants' Eli Manning as The Big Easy, and Robert Griffin III of the Washington Redskins as Triiiple Impact. In addition to appearing online, the heroes will be depicted on limited-edition Gatorade bottles.
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> To further engage fans, the site will encourage them to customize their own superheroes and compete for a winning comic book cover. Social media is a big component of the campaign, as fans can share their avatars on Facebook and Twitter (Rudy, 2014, https://goo.gl/6pMbV5).

Another important factor is to *live your brand,* especially when it is something that pertains to personal branding within the sport industry. Although this step is important when creating your brand, it is even more important when managing your brand, which we will take a deeper look into later in the reading.

Implement your brand into business – When building your brand, or rebranding it, you want every aspect of it to touch every aspect of your organization. This can be evident in tangible ways as well as non-tangible messages. An example of tangible ways in which your brand can be implemented into every part of your business is to have it attached to every email that is sent, every product that is released, and having it displayed at all events/ physical presences for the organization.

For example, some sport apparel organizations have contracts that require every employee of that business partner to only be seen in public view on official business wearing their product. This is also evident when athletes are doing personal branding. In this manner, the sport organization is not only doing business with the fellow sport organization, but they are also making sure they are being represented in every way while in business together.

Be consistent and diligent with your brand – This factor is essential when building a brand, but it also plays a key role in managing your brand, which we will cover next. In relation to building your brand, consistency is going to be represented in the way that you are perceived by the consumer. This includes not making knee-jerk reactions to initial responses if the organizational is solid in its brand beliefs. A major responsibility of the sport executive, and sport organizations in general, is to be very adaptable to changing marketing conditions. This is essential for success in today's ever-changing economy. With that being said, if the brand is solid and firmly entrenched in quality characteristics, the organization must be consistent and diligent with it from the start.

Implementing the brand – Building brand equity

Building brand equity is started during the process of creation of your brand, but it is continued during the implementation phase through the brand's life cycle. Once the brand elements and creative aspects are chosen, they can be expanded upon during the further implementation of the brand. By keeping in mind the brand elements and selection criteria mentioned before while choosing a brand, the sport executive strategically places the organization in the proper position of the mind of the consumer with brand equity.

Once the position is established, the organization uses marketing processes to continue to build on the brand equity. This communication is going to be in alignment with the marketing mission of the company and will utilize the strategies of product, pricing, and placement. These are the components of the marketing mix for a sport organization that are especially vital when looking at brand equity. A product strategy is implicit in branding because it assures that the product stays in line with the most recent technology, enhancements, and offerings of those other within the industry. For a sport organization, this can mean anything from offering the latest in seat technology in their stadium to impact the non-tangible fan experience, or updating the newest sport apparel product to stay in line with high performance endurance athletes. The next step in building brand equity can be accomplished by implementing an effective pricing strategy. Being decisive and progressive in pricing allows an organization to position themselves best within the market. This is also done to align its brand with the certain demographic they identified in the brand creation process. This can be

seen at many different points within a sport organization's business life cycle, as they may have different pricing strategies for different partners. A prominent soccer club would be offering a different pricing strategy for its kit sponsorship deal than it would for a community partnership with a local foundation benefiting impoverished youth. The last strategy a sport organization can utilize while building brand equity is the placement strategy. This marketing process has its roots in creating market implementation plans while informing the different advertising channel administrators about the products or services being offered. The correct placement and education of those partners within this strategy is essential in the partnership alignment process and will be the most effective when building your brand. Every sport executive should remember that even if they have the best product and price, if they are not able to reach the consumer, it is worthless. Keeping this in mind, the sport executive must realize that the best ability in business is availability. It is only with availability and the correct placement of the product that the most consumers can be engaged.

Building brand equity is done with the similar processes set in place as the internal marketing processes mentioned before, but it is also done by utilizing the secondary brand associations within an organization's network of partnerships. By utilizing these partnerships, the sport executive must realize that these connections can be done with partners currently involved within the organization, those currently involved with the community, and those currently involved within the industry. Three different ways the organizations can utilize these partnerships is through branding partnerships, exclusive licensing agreements, and utilizing endorsements from icons. Branding partnerships involve multiple partners joining together on a project or marketing cycle for mutually beneficial gain. This is done within the sport industry on every level. This alignment of partners can be a great way for a sport organization to expand its reach within its own market as well as their partners' market. A great example of this is listed below, and it is an excellent way of thinking outside the box by one of the industry leaders of branding partnership, the NBA, with the biggest market in the world, China.

> NBA China and ANTA Sports Products Limited today announced a new partnership in China, designating ANTA as an Official Marketing and Merchandising Partner of NBA China.
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> The announcement was made at a press conference in Beijing by NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and ANTA Sports Chairman and CEO Ding Shizhong, who were joined by NBA Champion Kevin Garnett of the Brooklyn Nets and NBA Legend Sam Perkins.

Through this new partnership, ANTA will launch a complete line of ANTA and NBA co-branded league and team-identified footwear and accessories, available in more than 2,000 ANTA stores around the country, and at ANTA's official online stores on Tmall (anta.tmall.com) and JingDong (anta.jd.com).

Along with ANTA-NBA co-branded footwear, ANTA will collaborate with NBA China to further grow the game of basketball in China and engage fans by participating in a number of events, including NBA Nation, NBA All-Star Balloting, and the ANTA Power Is Priceless Intramural League. More than 300 million people in China play basketball, making it the most popular team sport in the country (NBA Media Ventures, LLC., 2014, https://goo.gl/bL2rxx).

Exclusive licensing agreements are the second way to utilize your secondary brand associations. These can be done on multiple platforms in order to increase your organization's brand equity, as well as to have a profitable asset remain in clear view and in a favorable position within the consumer's mind. These licensing agreements can be done internally with in-house counsel or agents, or can be done by contracting out third-party organizations for their services. Especially for those companies looking to expand into the sports world, this can be a great penetration point at which they will pay top dollar for. A new landmark licensing deal seems to come up weekly, but it is important to remember what company you are licensing with, and their ability to deliver on the expectations of the deal. Established organizations such as Nike are often the most profitable when it comes to the larger entities deals, but they are not the only ones that can be utilized. For an example of a licensing deal affecting both organizations within sport, please review the terms of the deal between Nike and the NBA below.

Back in March 2015, word came down that Adidas would not renew its deal with the NBA for the licensing rights to official NBA apparel. Soon after, to no surprise, came word that Nike was closing in on the deal to take over. There was some speculation about some sort of surprise bid from Under Armour or another dark horse, but really, this was always going to be up to Nike and whether it wanted the rights. Not needed. Wanted. They wanted it.

What they got was an eight-year arrangement with the NBA for what is reportedly $1 billion, a 245 percent increase over the Adidas deal and $125 million annually

(ESPN). So throw that on the big pile of money that's going to push the salary cap into astronomic proportions starting in either 2017 or 2018 when the deal goes into effect.

It's good news for the players overall with that expected bump in revenue, plus it removes some awkwardness because so many of the players are signed with Nike. On the other side of things, the players with Adidas lose visibility with the league's official brand, but that could open up money to be spent on promoting them as athletes, with a stable of Derrick Rose, John Wall and Damian Lillard making strides this year.

Nike is also just a more natural pairing, having been the biggest basketball brand on the planet for so long, and due to its relationship not only with the league's most iconic athlete in Michael Jordan, but every major megastar (Kobe Bryant, LeBron James) since then. Seeing how Nike Basketball and its brand management reacts to the new partnership will be interesting, as well as the new designs for marquee events.

Above all else, this probably means the end of sleeved jerseys, and thank God for that.

"This partnership with NIKE represents a new paradigm in the structure of our global merchandising business," said NBA Commissioner Adam Silver. "As our exclusive on court apparel provider, NIKE will be instrumental in our collective efforts to grow the game globally while applying the latest in technology to the design of our uniforms and on court products" (Moore, 2015, https://goo.gl/qUpSBM).

Although this licensing deal is done by two industry titans, the principles and practices can be applied to the smallest of sport organizations with local community partners. It is the role of the sport executive to maintain a diligent and realistic approach on what agreements are able to be made, along with keeping the organization's best interest in mind.

Keeping the organization's best interest in mind is especially important when discussing the third channel of utilizing partnerships, cultural or sport icon endorsements. Endorsements in some form are something that has been happening with the industry of sport and competition since the time of the first Olympics in ancient Greece. Although it has roots much further back, the industry has truly recognized the importance of this with individual athletes making brands for themselves, along with celebrities within other recognizable industries.

The main thing the sport executive has to be cognizant of when tying an icon to its brand is the benefits that can be gained versus the negatives of any fallout. Often times, the teams within leagues use their own icons such as Lionel Messi for Barcelona or Cristiano Ronaldo for Real Madrid. Keeping this in mind, other sport organizations, or those involved heavily in sport business, utilize cultural icons that do not have that automatic connection. This balance of branding is also thought of from the icon's point of view. Something to keep in mind for this is that they want their personal brand to be tied to something with excellence. This could mean the icon may be even more apt to sign a less incentivized deal with a company that is looked on as being more entrenched in excellence if it will help grow their personal brand.

Measuring brand performance

Measuring brand performance is something that must be developed by each organization as it is establishing its goals and mission within its industry. There is a development process that goes into brand measurement and it can be defined by the sport organization by key metrics. These key metrics are something to be developed in conjunction with the brand creation process and will vary depending on the size and scope of the organization itself. Brand measurements will be categorized into three distinct categories, and there can be different metrics attached to each category. Within these different categories, the sport executive will have to determine which is the most valuable to their brand, but all three categories can be used when determining the brand effectiveness to position itself within the mind of the target consumer. The three categories are divided into the metrics of behaviors, perception, and performance.

Behavioral measurement – Behavior metrics deal with both internal factors and external factors for an organization. The internal factors deal with the management and employees of the organization, and can be the most directly affected by the branding of an organization with immediate impact. It is the role of the sport executive and the senior management team to maximize the abilities and uplift the attitudes of everyone in the organization. As discussed in the creating of the brand process, this involves everyone in the organization living the brand and being consistent with the message of the team. When a sport organization has all of its team members on board living the brand, the effects spill over into the natural market of the consumer. Think about how many other consumers one of your team member reaches throughout a week at a coffee shop, restaurant, or social gathering. Now think about that number of team members you have and multiply that number by 365 days a year. Referencing the example below, an organization that has 100 employees is seen by over a million outside consumers a year, if not more.

100 employees * 200 interactions * 52 weeks = 1,040,000 branding opportunities

Ways to keep your employees engaged, and metrics to determine their participation in living the brand, are very valuable to the sport organization and the sport executive. External branding metrics are also extremely essential to have when it comes to behavior, as they reinforce the brand/ value proposition within the market. Keeping external behavior measurement metrics, these are key data points to have when evaluating a brand and its effectiveness.

Perception measurement – Global perception and the market your organization is in become more and more important everyday within the ever-changing marketplace. With the advent of social media, brands have feedback that is immediate and can be seen through the eyes of the consumer on many different platforms. This feedback can be overwhelming sometimes, especially within the sport arena, and can have an immediate effect on brand awareness, concentration, and equity, as it is perceived within the eyes of the consumer. As a senior sport executive, the difficult task is to determine what is truly important in the eye of public perception, and what is attributed to the instant gratification nature. Although it is essential to be adaptable and listen to the market for feedback, it is not mandatory to change the course of a popular brand and/or organization because of a bad online review or discussion forum topic.

Performance measurement – Performance measurement is essential to not only the brand management process, but also to components within the marketing plan process. These performance metrics are measured from both a financial and customer perspective when it comes to revenue and engagement. These metrics are also extremely important when discussing the process of bringing in partnerships and sponsorships from outside organizations. The reason of this importance is because executives from other organizations want to use their own performance metrics to determine if they tap into your consumer base. They use these metrics to determine how much performance will increase in their own organizations. Tracking and measuring against Key Performance Indicators that are industry standard, as well as using ones that are specific to the sport organization itself, are both necessary elements for brand management. As with the other measurement methods, all data that is collected must be done by a standardized and vetted process which is executed with exact precision. It is only with these characteristics that an organization will truly be able to measure its brand.

Growing the brand

The last part of brand management, that is a challenge for new and well-established sport organizations alike, is trying to grow the brand. Growing the brand can be established in many different avenues, but we will take a look at three general processes in which organizations try to grow their brand. It is the job of a sport executive and the leadership team to decide what the process will be for their particular organization to grow. This process often times in includes a combination of the three. The three ways to generally grow a brand are:

- New products in new markets.
- New extensions to products in current market.
- Joint ventures/ acquisition of existing organizations.

The first avenue to grow the brand is to offer a different product within a different market. Diversifying has been a tactic used in the financial world since the beginning of wealth accumulation, and it has benefits, as it provides flexibility and safeguards against being too invested into one specific segment. A disadvantage when it comes to this process is that the organization might not be equipped to deal within that new arena. This could be a negative when the organization has to invest too much time and money to conquer a new market, when they do not have a solid hold on their own. Diversifying is only successful if an organization is able to maintain its same standards of excellence that it applies to the existing products being offered, to the new products. Even some of the best companies fail to succeed in new markets in which they are not familiar. With that being said, some are able to make the transition smoothly, and therefore opening themselves up to a whole new marketplace.

The second, and one of the most common ways organizations used to grow their brand, is releasing extensions of products within their current market. This is often looked at by some as the desire to dominate a market. This can be done, but it is especially hard within certain sport markets. For example, it is hard for a team within a league to offer another product on the field, since it is controlled by governance and regulations within the league, but with the right creativity and vision by the organization, the team or sport organization can still go after the sport consumer in different ways. This is shown by organizations gathering community funds for foundations, introducing new extensions to products such as game-day experiences, and also by creating a hybrid business model as shown by newly-formed educational outlets. Some sport organizations are exploring the world of certain professional services with their brand attached to them. This not only shows an extension to the already-engaged sport consumer, but also can be looked upon as entering a new market, which is academia.

The third form in which a sport organization can grow its brand is the concept of joint ventures and acquisition of existing organizations. Often times, the revenue producing and successful organizations are looking for investment to diversify their own portfolio as mentioned in the first example. Instead of creating a new product for a new market, the organization will acquire a company in that market and be a parent company for that organization. This has been happening in venture capital and business circles for years. This form of expansion has gained new interest and momentum recently, as sport organizations have a deeper connection and are more powerful than ever in today's business world. This third avenue is also something that can be thought of as a partnership, as mentioned before, but instead of the sport organization being a partner with the new organization, it can have a controlling interest and control the other organization's brand now as well.

By having these extensions of its brand, the sport organization and its executives must be concerned with the ability to align with the right partners more than ever. In order to align with these right partners, the sport executive is responsible for doing their proper research and prospecting as it relates to the sponsorship process. In order to do this effectively, the sport executive must realize the importance of brand alignment within both organizations, and then deliver the necessary tools for sponsorship alignment. In the next module we will dive deeper into this prospecting process, and establish the next steps needed for success.

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