



## Sports marketing's characteristics

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DOI: [https://doi.org/10.37359/JOPE.V35\(4\)2023.1954](https://doi.org/10.37359/JOPE.V35(4)2023.1954)

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Article history: Received 1/10/2023 Accepted 10/12/2023 Available online 12,28,2023

### ABSTRACT

Sports marketing has established itself over the last three decades not only as a very special form of marketing, but also as a subject of research. However, it is quite surprising that the nature of sports marketing is relatively unknown, as different definitions of sports marketing seem to indicate. In fact, there is currently no universally agreed-upon definition of sports marketing, and views on the subject are quite divergent. This paper examines the nature of sports marketing and therefore seeks to contribute to the ongoing discussion as to whether sports marketing is any different from principal marketing or just a modified version. Three distinct definitions of sports marketing are discussed at the outset. Then the unique characteristics of sports and sports marketing are described followed by the implications for sporting organizations, companies involved in sports marketing, and sports marketing academics. The paper concludes with a summary of the concept of sports marketing that illustrates the very special nature of sports marketing both verbally and graphically.

The mission of sport marketers is to raise brand awareness of the products and services available to consumers, regardless of the nature and level of sports, which are all necessary to boost events' attendance and generate excitement. For a successful marketing, sport marketers must first conduct a thorough consumer research analysis to learn about the target audience's needs, motivations and interests pertaining to the promoted product or service. When a business is enthusiastic about satisfying its clients and seeks to establish enduring connections that benefit the business and its stakeholders, that is a sign of an effective marketing strategy. (Kotler & Keller, 2011). Traditionally, the marketing mix consists of the following four elements: product, price, place, and promotion.

**Keywords:** Sports Marketing, Social Network, Sports Products

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## Introduction

Around the world, millions of people work in sports, most people play or watch sports, and at the professional or elite level, sports have evolved from being an amateur pastime to a significant industry. The growth and professionalization of sport have driven changes in the consumption, production and management of sporting events and organizations at all sporting levels.

Managing sport organizations at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century involves the application of techniques and strategies evident in the majority of modern businesses, government and non-profit organizations. Sport managers work in highly integrated global networks of national sport organizations, international sports federations, government agencies, media corporations, sponsors, and community organizations. They also handle billion-dollar broadcasting contracts, manage a large number of human resources, and oversee the welfare of elite athletes who sometimes make 100 times the average working wage.

Students of sport management therefore need to develop an understanding of the special features of sport and its allied industries, the environment in which sport organizations operate, and the types of sport organizations that operate in the public, non-profit, and professional sectors of the sports industry. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of these points and highlights the unique aspects of sport organizational management.

In recent years, many definitions of sports marketing have been developed by academics and organizations that are interested in the field. However, there isn't a widely recognized definition. This could be due to a variety of factors, including varying opinions regarding sports marketing and its evolving nature. In this case, Van Heerden's definition suggests that while sports marketing is founded on marketing principles, it also requires particular applications. This raises the question of whether and to what extent sports marketing is different from other types of marketing. By looking at the distinctive features of sports marketing, the next part aims to provide a solution to the aforementioned query.

### The sports product

Any good, service, or any combination of the two that is designed to provide benefits to a sports spectator, participant, or sponsor, is how Shank describes a sports product. Sports organizations' offerings can be separated into two categories: core products and product extensions. The first game, sporting event, or competition is the core product; all other products or services that are associated with the core product, such as merchandise, catering, hospitality, or information services, are considered product extensions. While the product extensions might be either goods or services, the core product contains all the qualities of a service, including intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability, and the inseparability of production and consumption. Participant sports and spectator sports can be distinguished by their basic products.

In spectator sports, sporting organizations aim to draw spectators to the event or game, whereas in participation sports, they try to encourage as many individuals as possible to get involved in their particular sport. According to Lovelock's (1991) description of the nature of the service act, attending athletic events might be categorized as a people-based service aimed at people's minds. Sports organizations



need distinct strategies to market their products because there are very different reasons to participate in a sport actively vs just watch it passively (Nufer, 2002b; Nufer, 2006). With billions of people watching live or recorded sporting events, spectator sports make up the majority of the sports sector, even though participation sports are becoming more and more important in light of the fitness trend. Sports marketers must contend with certain distinctive features of the fundamental sports product, though.

### **The consumer**

Sports fans differ from regular customers of regular businesses in a number of ways. This is particularly evident when considering traditional soccer fans. First of all, people typically have greater fervor for their beloved football team than for their brand of choice. Second, supporters are very devoted to their team. According to Dempsey and Reilly (1998), this loyalty is explained by the fact that football fans find something in the game that they cannot get elsewhere, such as an escape from the mundane world of work, the excitement and adrenaline of a game, or the sense of belonging to a community. Consequently, supporters swear loyalty to their teams. The third distinction results from passion and loyalty: football fans frequently exhibit illogical consumer behavior.

An associated effect of loyalty is that football fans are essentially powerless to choose what they want to buy. Ordinary consumers typically have a variety of products to choose from, however they may have preferences. It is rare for football fans to switch to a different team just because the rival's ticket prices are lower.

### **Sports Marketing**

The word "marketing" is used in many different contexts. Marketing, according to some, is the process of spreading awareness of a product or getting more people to buy it through publicity, advertising, and personal selling techniques. Nevertheless, marketing is far broader than this limited idea. To put it simply, marketing is the process of concentrating on meeting the requirements and desires of clients or consumers.

. Accordingly, sport marketing is centered on satisfying the demands of sport consumers, such as those who play sports, watch or listen to sports news and programming, collect memorabilia, buy merchandise, buy sporting goods like shirts and shoes, or even visit a sports website to learn the most recent information about their preferred team, athlete, or event.

A person who frequently uses sporting goods or services is known as a sport consumer. A sport customer is a person who purchases a particular good or service. The terms can be used interchangeably to describe those who purchase and use sporting goods and services.

### **Sport Is a Unique Product**

Combining marketing ideas for sporting goods and services with the promotion of unrelated sporting goods through sporting events is known as sports marketing. Therefore, there are two main components to sports marketing. The first is the application of standard marketing techniques to sports-related goods and services. The second is the use of sports to promote other industrial goods or services. Sport

marketing aims to satisfy consumer demands and desires, just like any other type of marketing.

It makes sense to assume that sport marketing entails both the promotion of sports and the use of sports as a vehicle for the promotion of other goods and services. Sports equipment, professional contests, sporting events, and local clubs are a few examples of products and services that can be marketed directly to sports customers. Additional examples include creating licensed clothing for sale, selling season tickets, team advertising, and creating a publicity stunt to support a player. When a non-sport product is marketed by association with sport, this is known as marketing through sport. A famous athlete promoting a biscuit, a company sponsoring a sports event, or even beverage firms securing the sole right to serve drinks at a sporting event or location are a few instances (Coca Cola n.d.).

To comprehend the entire spectrum of uses for sport, these two facets of sport marketing are essential. However, their propensity to highlight the commercial side of sports marketing is a shortcoming. In order to determine what sport consumers desire and the most effective ways to supply it, a long-term strategic analysis must be planned before any transactions take place. Therefore, a collection of planning and execution tasks associated with the provision of a sport-related good or service should also be regarded as sport marketing.

Branding is the process of creating such a reaction, and a sports brand is considered positioned once it has established a presence in customers' thoughts. Strong market positioning and effective branding lead to more than just a single transaction; sport marketing has also reflected the development of a consistent relationship between a sport brand and its consumers.

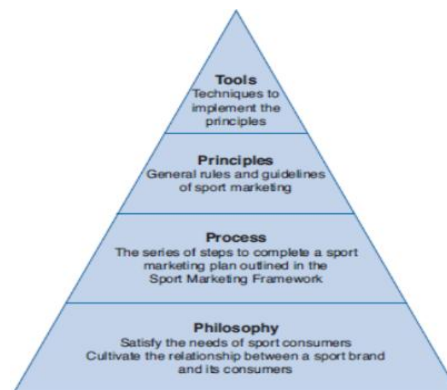


Figure1: Structure of Sport Marketing

### Sport Marketing Mix Elements

The "Marketing Mix" is a tactic that sports organizations frequently employ. The "Four P's" of marketing are the four variables that make up this tool. To achieve the desired outcomes in its particular target market, the marketing mix combines several factors. The four P's of marketing are as follows:



• **Product:** A company's products are the items and services it offers to its target market. Customer service and any after-sales care must be taken into account while creating a product's quality, design, features, and packaging. Manufacturers typically make the decisions on what things to make and let consumers select from them. Customers can, however, post about their requirements and product preferences on social media, to which businesses can respond. For instance, Adidas creates unique products for their customers based on their feedback on their blogs and websites.

• **Place:** This describes the product's distribution, placement, and delivery methods to the client. This covers the company's location, storefront, distributors, and logistics. This component has a fresh future thanks to social networking and e-commerce (Rank, n.d.). Consumers can buy straight from producers without the involvement of middlemen.

• **Price:** The cost that consumers must pay to utilize the products is known as the price. A product's pricing will be determined by several factors, including the cost of production, the desired profit margin, the prices of competitors, and the price that customers are willing to pay. Consumers can debate and compare pricing online and through social media.

• **Promotion:** Promoting a product involves interacting with customers to inform them of its worth. It then entails influencing general consumers to buy from the company using techniques including sales promotion, direct marketing, advertising, and personal selling. This component heavily relies on social media. Manchester United's social media marketing mix plan provides a better way to conceptualize this.

Every product features the picture of a top-tier football team that plays and wins in a spectacular manner. Additionally, the product includes trade elements like the selling of shirts and other souvenirs. Additionally, the product is allotted to Manchester United's own television station and television rights. Although Manchester United's home games are held at Old Trafford, the team also plays at a number of other locations. Naturally, the club's website and various other social media platforms are used to sell its merchandise.

Manchester United promotes their brand as a global one. Additionally, the club participates in a range of marketing initiatives, such as partnerships with mobile phone provider Vodafone. Through its website, Manchester United sells and promotes a wide range of products, including books, shirts, key rings, and programs. The term "positioning" or "repositioning" describes where a product is placed within a market, for as by presenting it as an up-market or down-market product, or as a product for younger or older consumers.



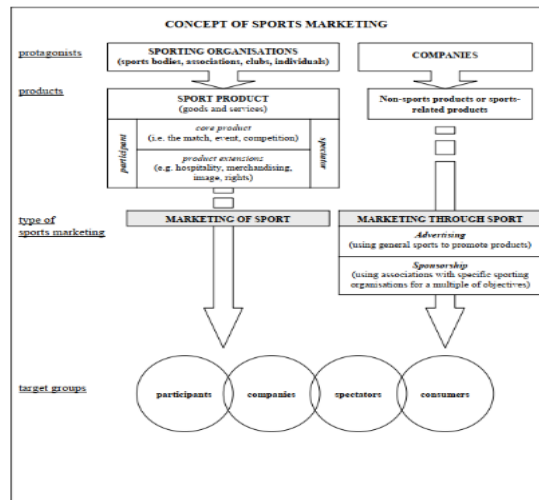


Figure2: Concept of Sports Marketing .

## Literature Review

Rebranding Egypt as the new hub for squash and other youth sports requires effective sport marketing. However, Egypt's sports marketing business is still very young (Alafandi & Séguin, 2008). Ironically, as academics argue, the new meaning of sports marketing in Egypt was brought about by the growing reduction in government funding for sports federations over the past 20 years (Alafandi & Séguin, 2008). With the exception of a few professional soccer teams that made money from their marketing campaigns, sport marketing in Egypt had previously generally proceeded slowly and haphazardly (Alafandi & Séguin, 2008).

As a result, there is still a dearth of literature on sport marketing as a separate profession and sector (Al-Khaja, 2001). However, what has been discovered thus far is that Egyptian sport organizations have historically received little to no support from the corporate sector, with the majority of their funding coming from government organizations like the Egyptian Sports Council. This is a phenomenon that has been noted in other nations (Séguin, Teed, & O'Reilly, 2005; Zaki & Fekri, 2006).

Sports federations were forced to look for outside and alternative resources within Egypt's private sector as a direct result of the government gradually withdrawing its financial assistance due to the country's increasingly challenging economic condition (Zaki & Fekry, 2006). This process of looking for other resources has proven to be challenging. For instance, the majority of businesses (68 percent) wanted to sponsor football games, according to Shalaby's (2004) study. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge brought about by the paucity of market and scientific research on sports may have created an additional barrier, keeping Egyptian sports federations from taking use of already-existing marketing opportunities (Zaki & Fekri, 2006).

According to a recent report from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS, 2016), the average Egyptian family spent 10,972 pounds (L.E.) on sports, promotions, activities, and services in 2010–2011. This amounts to 1.7



percent of the family's total spending, while the Egyptian government's investments in sports federations accounted for 2.7 percent of its total expenditures.

According to Al-Jabali (2017), the Ministry of Youth and Sports' funding also drastically decreased, going from 4,163 million pounds (L.E.) at the end of 2014 to 4,068 million pounds in 2016.

Sports promotions primarily seek to raise brand awareness and pique the interest of as many consumers as possible (Estiri et al., 2010). In general, the phrase "promotional mix" describes a wide range of communication techniques that a business uses to promote its goods and services in order to evoke strong feelings in both current and potential customers (Kokemuller, 2017).

Promotional activities are the main means by which organizations in the sports industry create and maintain a strong brand image and awareness (Schwarz & Hunter, 2008). In order to effectively tailor one's sales, branding, and marketing activities—all of which ultimately determine the success of an organization's efforts to position its products and services in a revenue-driven competitive sports world—it is crucial to be able to predict how consumers will react to promotional incentives and campaigns (Banerjee, 2009).

One of the most important—and challenging—decisions a sports marketer has to make is choosing the right promotional mix. The type and nature of the product or service must be taken into account, along with the particular requirements and characteristics of the intended customers. The four elements of a successful promotional mix are (a) advertising, (b) public relations, (c) sales promotion/direct marketing, and (d) personal selling, according to some researchers who have studied effective promotion campaigns (Bocşe et al., 2012; Eric, 2012; Estiri et al., 2010; Kokemuller, 2017; Kotler & Keller, 2011; Mihai, 2013; Pour, Nazari, & Emami, 2013; Sunday & Bayode, 2011).

Direct communication with customers is unquestionably far more useful than any placement of a paid advertisement (Roesch, 2014). Flyers and posters were used to establish direct engagement with target consumers prior to the advent of social media (Abad et al., 2010).

## **Discussion**

Users of various social networks vary greatly in terms of demographics (e.g., age, sex, race, wealth, and educational achievement). According to a 2011 report from the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project (Humpton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell, 2011), about half of American adults (47 percent), or 59 percent of Internet users in America, state that they use at least one social networking site. This is close to doubling the 26% of adults (34% of internet users) who used a social network site in 2008.

Internet users of all ages are more likely to use a social network site today than they were in 2008, while the growth of social network site use has been particularly noticeable among people over 35. In 2008, only 18% of internet users aged 36 or older used a social network site; by 2010 48% of internet users over the age of 35 were using a social network site. This is about twice the growth experienced by internet users aged

18-35, 63% of whom had used a social network site in 2008 compared with 80% in 2010. This indicates, among other things, that the average age of adults who use social networking sites has changed, rising from 33 in 2008 to 38 in 2010.

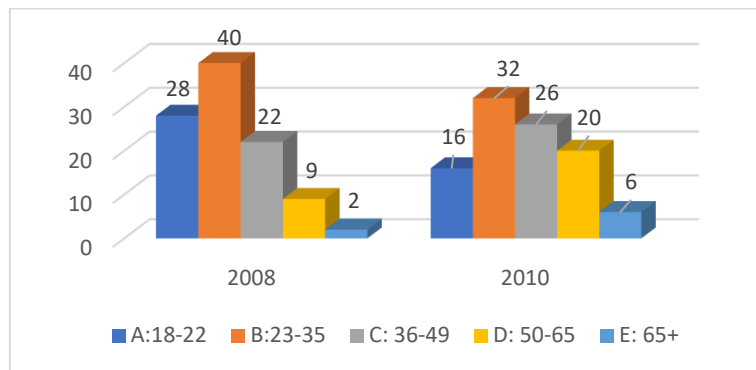


Figure3: Age distribution of social networking site in 2008 and 2010 .

## **Conclusion**

Sports marketers are trying to market their non-sports products or sports-related products (e.g football uniforms, athletic footwear, or nutrient-dense beverages) through sports, either through sponsorship or promotion. On the one hand, they want to connect with their target audience by being associated with sports, and on the other hand, they want to turn sports fans and/or athletes into new clients.

Sporting organizations, however, are marketing their sports products, which can be divided into participant sports (with existing or potential participants as the target group) and spectator sports (with existing or potential spectators as the target group). Marketing and promoting the core product (i.e. the game, the competition or event) is a difficult task because the core product also has certain unique characteristics (e.g. unpredictability and spontaneity). Sporting organizations also have to market product extensions, which can be goods (e.g. merchandising articles) or services (e.g. hospitality, information, communication rights).

Social media in sport marketing explores sports marketing goals in relation to social media tools and concept being used today. The most important change in the sports world is due to the advent of social media. With platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, there are millions of users to whom sports brands can be promoted. The social media industry has made an incredible impact on all businesses including sports businesses. Social media in the sport world has created a quick and efficient way to communicate with fans and customers by specializing and detailing information, in addition to conventional advertising and promotion being enhanced through these communications. Generally, it can be said that social media is rapidly becoming a force to be reckoned with for any organizations around the world.





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