

COLLABORATION BETWEEN MARKETING AND SPORTS

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Abstract:

Sport has been and still is a social phenomenon of great importance. Through and with the help of sports activity, people develop their social, volitional, moral or cognitive qualities and skills. Even intelligence or speed in thinking is greatly influenced. There is no need to remind here the importance of physical activity on the mental or physical health of citizens. It can be seen that we live in a highly industrialized society, implicitly and polluted, with many facilities but also disruptive factors for the good of the individual (sedentary activities, incorrect nutrition, manipulation, etc.). In the paper "Collaboration between marketing and sports" we aimed to present how the collaboration between marketing and sports managed to be an important success, including the use of social networks and the presentation of some of the most successful marketing campaigns in sports.

Keywords: *sport, social media, marketing, communication.*

Introduction

We have seen that sport has been influenced throughout its genesis and evolution by various factors. Of these factors, the one that mattered the most was and is society's attitude towards sports movement and physical education activities (Kotler, 2012, Barbu & Diaconescu, 2018). If in antiquity the Greeks practiced various competitions, of which the Olympic Games were the most appreciated and "enjoyed" for aesthetic purposes (or utilitarian in the case of Sparta), the Romanians practiced these competitions in a decadent form (or in preparation for war). These ancient competitions were attended by different social classes, forming a larger or smaller audience, depending on the case. A state of emulation has always been created around sport. Even the Middle Ages, the dark ages, had an audience at competitions specific to that period (riding, tournaments, etc.). Finally, to conclude we say that sport needs the support of the public to exist and this has made it possible for today to have a special focus on promoting, disseminating through

the media and even marketing it. This trade has a dark side, it brings some shortcomings, but there is just that sport to perpetuate as a show or as a business. The role of relaxation and training of sports activities for all and physical education also depends on this. Currently, marketing borrows or adapts cognitive domains (psychology, sociology, linguistics, semiotics and anthropology) to be ubiquitous and to attract supporters, sponsors or others (Barbu, 2010). The connection between sports and marketing has become particularly close in this context.

Literature review

Communication through sports, much more effective than traditional advertising

Sport is an increasingly important part of the economy, and more and more capital is directed to and produced from football (Stroe & Barbu, 2006, Barbu et al., 2020b). A study by marketing and communication specialists from Sport Evolution Group (SEG), Media Image and the Center of Excellence in Marketing (ASE) demonstrates the

effectiveness of communication through sport (and especially through football).

Titled "Football is more economical than detergent", the study concludes that 1 euro invested in sports is worth as much as 6 euros used for exposure in the traditional media.

Football is the most powerful media vehicle for the masses. It arouses emotions, consumes energy, creates a state of optimism among fans, but also a dependence between consumer and brand through the emotional impact that occurs during sporting events (Barbu, 2009). No other television production develops such a strong attachment between the viewer, the player and the show.

Sports events build the feeling of certainty, stability and safety between product and consumer, an attachment that can be won very hard and with huge budgets in other media - TV advertising, radio and online.

"Football is more economical than detergent" is the first complex study to analyse the benefits obtained by companies in sports, and will become a unique calculation formula in the media industry on the return on investment in sports. The study establishes for the first time in Romania the return of one euro investment in sports compared to the traditional television media.

The study aimed to calculate transparently and clearly the way brands involved in sports communicate, actively, by investing in specific means of communication: game equipment, location branding, communication in stadiums through LED and fixed system.

The exposure offered is huge in terms of national coverage. The images from matches, interviews and press conferences are taken over by all the televisions in the news bulletins and by the televisions that have the broadcasting rights in daily sports analysis shows. The number of spectators and viewers provides the data of the largest mass communication process.

Brands that have been successful in communicating through sports (Constatinescu, 2004, Crăciun & Barbu, 2014).

As an image benefit after choosing to communicate through sports, it was found that, in general, Timișoreana - the brand that

was directly associated with the Romanian Cup - leads in a top of media exposure.

Regarding the brands that associated their image with League 1 through SEG Team, it was found that Stanleybet had the best Investment Ratio vs. Media 1:12. Translated financially, this report reveals that 1 euro invested in sport has guaranteed an exposure of at least 12 euros in the traditional average.

McDonalds obtained a 1:7 ratio, and the figures recorded by Ceresit, Duraziv and Nutline indicate a ratio of 1 to 6 in favor of communication through sports.

With an investment of 10,000 euros in sports, the marketing budget saves at least 50,000 euros, money that can be invested in other departments, such as sales.

The high efficiency is the result of the exposure of rerun images on most television channels in sports analysis shows and sports news. The communication systems used were LED systems, fixed systems and flash-interview panels.

The real image impact was higher because, in the evaluation, the free exposure generated from the retransmission of images in the written press and, especially, on the Internet was not taken into account.

58 sports news journals per day

Sport is one of the areas very well represented on the small screen, with a target audience that is characterized by heterogeneity and fidelity. Many sports enthusiasts make up their daily schedule so that they are in front of the TV when the main sports news shows are broadcast.

Realitatea TV and RTV led in the top of general and news television, according to the number of sports news magazines included in the weekly schedule (91 shows). At the opposite pole were TVR2 and PrimaTV (14). The two main generalist stations as an audience, Pro TV and Antena1, broadcast 42 sports newspapers each.

In total, there were 406 news journals that week, averaging 58 per day. If we take into account the sports televisions, daily, there were 127 sports news programs and 20 sports analysis programs.

Very importantly, in the long run, communication through sports will increase considerably. Sport is the only environment

that will not be affected by the transition of television content on the Internet, because sport means content, and exposure through it is not aggressive, leading to positive congruence between brand and consumer.

The influence of social networks on sports marketing

A social network is, generally speaking, a network of people with common goals, for example a network of students, specialists in a field. In recent years, the social network has acquired the meaning of a network of Internet users where users can sign up and interact with other users, already registered. Thus, members of a social network are interconnected informally, without obligations, but usually actively contribute to the collection and dissemination of information around the globe through the web.

Due to the evolution, we see and feel, social networks have more and more users and have managed to change the way we perceive various things in today's society, the world of sports (Almotairi, 2014). Numerous different social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube etc.; led to their use by people as an important tool for distributing content and attracting new readers, as well as creating greater participation. Social networks have impacted sports in many different ways, such as communications and sports marketing. This form of media communication involves a variety of new ways (sometimes even people) that mediate information from the entrepreneur to the public and vice versa (Barbu et al., 2020a). The ultimate intention remains constant - educating the public about products, services, brands, services, personalities or issues.

Entrepreneur-customer / potential customer communication is considered much more sincere in the virtual environment, through social networks, because those who provide feedback feel freer to evaluate and less vulnerable to the one who runs the business, they feel safe.

Why has social media become such a used tool for sports, for fans and athletes? This can be explained by the fact that nowadays everyone has to be present online to be up to

date with all the news, also being a much cheaper way and with a greater impact of advertising than the traditional media (Barbu et al., 2019).

For various sports organizations, the benefits of these tools are numerous, contributing, among other things, to improving public relations, reducing marketing costs and increasing sales.

Third, social networks have gained attraction as an essential tool for connecting with sports fans. Thus, fans, through social media can be up to date with everything that happens with the favourite team or player, both on and off the field.

Finally, athletes can benefit from using social media to connect with their fans, build a personal brand, and promote themselves (Stelzner, 2013).

83% of fans also check their social media accounts while watching sports events on TV, and 63% of fans use social media while on the stadium. Thus, the big brands try, in the most creative ways, to reach them.

For example, Manchester United has set up the "United Social Hub", where fans find posts from all social networks in one place - something similar, but on a different scale, with our sport feed.

More and more brands need to adapt and keep up with the changes that occur in marketing, due to this interconnection of people through social media (Evans, 2010).

This interconnection includes over 3 billion people present on social networks, to find out what's new in all areas.

Due to these influences, sports companies also adopt social media strategies to attract more sports fans (Browning & Sanderson, 2012).

The latest trends for social media in sports, which are proven ways to interact with fans and the target audience.

In the most non-technical terms, vanity metrics are those results on social media that make us look stronger than others. They are the easiest to see but also among the easiest to obtain. They are the easiest to understand even if their interpretation is often wrong.

Page likes or followers or, less often, subscribers

Everyone who does not work in depth with Social Media data believes that the number of fans on Facebook or Instagram is a sign of brand value and appreciation.

Post likes

Everyone who doesn't work in depth with Social Media data thinks that the number of likes and hearts on Facebook or Instagram is a sign of how wonderful your posts are. Which is and is not true.

Video views

Everyone who does not work in depth with Social Media data believes that the number of views on a video is a qualitative indicator. Which is true ... on one condition ...

What percentage of the video was viewed or how many minutes your video was watched on average, or retention ... only there is the measure that a) you made a good video and b) that those to whom you showed your video, organic or paid, they appreciated something about him.

The influence of social networks in marketing is achieved through the following actions:

Campaigns with influencers - from experience these campaigns lead to natural increases in the number of followers.

STRENGTHS:

-The added benefit of image association.

-Collaborations with influencers generate content that has high visibility.

-In general, the quality of the followers brought is good.

WEAKNESSES:

-Expensive campaigns.

-Unable to estimate the number of followers generated by a campaign.

Quality content, promoted through the media

STRENGTHS:

-The best quality of followers - those who choose to like / follow / subscribe after seeing something published by you, promoted or not.

a) clearly interested in what the brand has to say.

b) have the basic knowledge to use social media (you'd be surprised how many people don't know how to use and what different buttons in MS mean).

-The media budget is the most efficiently invested - awareness / engagement campaigns reach their goals and have as a side effect bonus and increasing the number of fans.

WEAKNESSES:

-The number of followers is increasing very slowly.

-The estimate of the cost per follow is extremely inaccurate, can be done after a long time and is dependent on content campaigns.

Contests - of two kinds - simple and difficult

Simple competitions - the requirement to participate requires minimal effort.

STRENGTHS:

They can attract fans very quickly.

Relatively cheap and easy to organize.

WEAKNESSES:

The quality of the fans is very poor (contestants).

Difficult contests

STRENGTHS:

I attract better quality fans even if fewer because the requirement to participate need effort (a creation, a photo, a purchase).

WEAKNESSES:

Risks of hit and miss - very low participation.

Ads for close page likes / follows / subscribers

WEAKNESSES:

The weakest quality of followers.

STRENGTHS:

The cost per follower can become predictable relatively quickly

Depending on your budget, you can attract relatively many followers in a relatively short time.

UGC strategy - involves attracting and publishing fan-generated content.

STRENGTHS:

Fans attracted by such campaigns can quickly become loyal ambassadors of the brand.

Attracted fans can be selected / filtered.

Their content can be included in the content strategy of your Social Media account.

WEAKNESSES:

The number of followers is slowly increasing.

Risk of niche on certain categories of public.

Findings and discussions: Sports Marketing Campaigns That Have Been Successful

Sports marketing is expanding rapidly and one of the biggest challenges is expanding the brand globally. The main goal is the access of clubs to new player markets, to fans and sponsors internationally.

A very good example is Manchester City by creating the CFG (City Football Group).

Since the takeover in 2008 by investors in Abu Dhabi, Manchester City has not only become one of the most successful English football clubs, but also the most interesting brand, forming a "family of clubs" to reach to fans around the world.

The clubs connected to each other in order to build their own brand and, obviously, revenues are: New York City FC, US Major League Soccer (MLS), Melbourne City FC, Yokohama F Marinos and Melbourne City.

As the group grew, innovative approaches to brand management and business partnerships were introduced to demonstrate the quality of the agreement between the clubs.

With Manchester City as the brand driver, CFG aims to form its smaller teams in leagues around the world, bearing the image of the Premier League giant.

They have now reached 400 million fans globally.

„The inverted jersey”

In recent years, a major problem has been racism. One of Brazil's best football teams, Botafogo, has found a very interesting way to make its fans aware.

Because, of course, the colour does not matter they reversed the order of the lines on the game shirt. And, of course, no one noticed. The investment in the "The inverted jersey" campaign was \$ 5,000.

Here are the results:

- ✓ Return on Investment (ROI) of USD 1.5 million,
- ✓ 78% increase in visibility,
- ✓ 180,000 online mentions,
- ✓ 14,000 new fans.

#BeTheDifference

The big brands know that football teams have a lot of fans and are constantly working on their loyalty campaigns.

#BeTheDifference is the campaign that brought under the same umbrella the football clubs Manchester United, AC Milan, Chelsea and Juventus Torino and which together supported ADIDAS.

Following this campaign, ADIDAS partners increased by up to 200% compared to the previous year and thus ADIDAS gained an advance over its main rival, NIKE.

„The Heritage Kit”

In 2016, PSV Eindhoven celebrates the end of its collaboration with PHILIPS, as the main sponsor, after 34 years - the longest in the history of football clubs so far.

The action was done in a unique way, the team played the last two matches in a special equipment. Its design is a return to the shirt worn in 1982, with classic elements, including the club logo that was used between 1917 and 1937.

"The Heritage Kit" has very high sales, being available even in the version of the Christmas gift, packed in special boxes.

"SL Benfica – Safety Instructions"

The use of technology and the experience of fans is more than important in sports marketing

If in Romania the causes of empty stadiums are studied, abroad sports clubs have understood how to attract fans to the stadium.

An example comes from Portugal, from SL Benfica, and the promotion of the collaboration with the new sponsor Emirates in a very special way. A few minutes before the start of the match, an Emirates crew surprises the 65,000 fans with a demonstration of rescue instructions adapted to their support of the team (Safety instructions).

The results of the campaign, which won the Clio Sports Awards, are astonishing:

- ✓ 65,000 live audience;
- ✓ 386,000 TV audience;
- ✓ 24 million views online;
- ✓ 930,000 interactions;
- ✓ 300,000 shares.

„805 million names”

Large companies want to associate with the values of sport, with entities sports clubs, sports clubs or sports clubs

Together they participate in humanitarian campaigns, awareness campaigns.

Two examples come from Zlatan Ibrahimovic and "805 Million names", the anti-hunger awareness campaigns, made by the World Food Program - the largest humanitarian agency in the world.

Ibrahimovic: "Every time you hear my name you will think of their name, every time you see me, you will see them."

Real Madrid – Snapchat partnership

Real Madrid understood what to do to win from social media on the football field.

The first official live story for Real Madrid included the match against FC Barcelona.

This event via Snapchat got the best moments when the BBVA League team plays against the second strongest team in the league.

Spectators at the stadium were able to present their own Snaps to a live story option on their mobile devices for a possible inclusion in the story, which was organized by a team dedicated to Snapchat. The result was a short video broadcast that all of the approximately 100 million daily active Snapchat users were able to access on their phones.

Conclusions

According to the explanations given by specialists, this branch of business determines two very well-defined subcategories:

Sports marketing: when sports marketing specialists make consistent efforts to promote the image of a championship / club / athlete. The effects of such an effort: more spectators in the stands, more tickets sold, etc.

Marketing through sports: when certain companies become sponsors of a championship / club / athlete, thus promoting themselves by associating with the sphere of sports.

Sports marketing must sell an extremely convenient product for sponsors, so that companies can direct marketing budgets to support sports performance. If in the case of top athletes, sponsorships are directly proportional to their fame, in the case of teams with potential / young athletes, sponsorships can easily cover only the

"strictly necessary" to increase and achieve performance.

Sports marketing has a huge growth potential in Romania, precisely due to people's passion for sports, regardless of its nature. Football, tennis, handball and basketball can attract huge investments to popularize the sport and develop the level of competitiveness, offering sponsors a media exposure similar to that offered by other channels, thus generating a beneficial marketing mix for both parties.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have equally contributed to this study.

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