Chapter 5

Fantasy Sports and Gambling in Sport: Marketing Implications for Branding and Fan Engagement

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ABSTRACT

Modern sports/media complex may be the result of complex inactions of communication technologies, social developments, and the increased sophistication of businesses in understanding the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of consumer behavior. From the promotion options of print media, television and radio, to the self-engaging aspects of Internet sport coverage and gaming, the spectator is rapidly becoming an integral part of the branding process. Media, especially fantasy sports, has transcended the traditional roles of television’s function as agents of exposure to engagement and personal involvement in athletic contest and its merchandising. Although the media aspect may been neglected in sports research, media research traditionally has considered sports too popular for traditional research. This paper explores some of the major topics for research that combines sports and newer forms of media exploitation for marketing purposes.

INTRODUCTION

Fantasy Sports and Office Betting Implications

Although the sport literature is fairly sparse on the roles of fantasy sports and/or gambling in sport in relation to academic research and its impacts on fan engagement in sport organizations, there has been considerable interest on the topic. Aspects that the current paper will deal with include revenue generation of fantasy sports and/or gambling, branding implications for leagues, and other relevant issues related to gambling and sport enterprise operations. In general, the roles of fantasy and gambling in sport
are many and can be more difficult to separate from more traditional sporting venues. Schirato (2012) suggested that in gaming and fantasy sport engagement allow the fan or user to be located in the field of vision, permitting the fan to do more than simply watch, but to some extent contributing to or even making the sport. It is a type of visual enhancement that is promoted by technology that both disposes and facilitates continuous mobile vision. Fantasy sport foregrounds watching as an active and productive process. Hence, at least from the fan perspective, it is game that he/she watched and is produced out of their work efforts, choices, and literacies. Sports-related organizations have promoted a brand image and loyalty that transcends all levels of social-economic levels, especially at the collegiate, professional and international sport teams’ competition (Bouchet, Ballouli, & Bennett, 2011; Coates & Humphreys, 1999; Pedersen, 2013; Seguin, Richelieu, & O’Reilly, 2008).

Social media and its related technological developments has especially accelerated branding experiences, such as Facebook™, MySpace™, YouTube™, and Wikipedia™, that ultimately allow the consuming public the opportunity to express their opinions and shape their future viewing experience (Zimmerman, Clavio, & Lim, 2011). Fantasy sports, in particular, allow the participant to strategic trade, manage, and alter the contest in ways never available before. The degree of involvement is dictated by the levels of active and productive processes, based on individual degree of effort, choices, and literacies (Schirato, 2012). Coupled with the engaging activities associated with fantasy sports participation, sport-relating office pooling and gambling provide additional avenues for fans to become engaged in the sport industry. One of the fastest growing forms of sports gambling is online betting, which typically consists of poker, betting on the outcomes of certain popular sporting events, bingo, and online casinos. However, the consuming public is not the only stakeholder involved in the media experience. Corporate sponsors, sports writers, broadcasters, sports executives, and players must all be considered in setting an agenda that meets their needs as well.

**Revenue Generation in Sport Enterprises**

As with most modern businesses, sport organizations need to shift the sport promotion mix to ensure continuous positive cash flows from its products and services. Changing from sport as a product to entertainment as a personalized consumer product essentially needs a shift in sport promotion mix paradigm. If the current focus is on the entertainment aspect of the sport, it would need a very different marketing campaign. In such a case, while there is no direct transaction is derived and/or expected, there is an expectation from the consumer for marketing the entertainment aspect to be done in a certain way. With entertainment as the focus, the promotion mix needs to become focused on fans and friends enjoying the event together in the imagery rather than the sport being the focus in the imagery. As the debate of the entertainment versus the consumerism aspects of sport, is there any way that the promotion could stay the same and still effectively attract consumers to the entertainment aspect?

It is essentially true that tangible products differ from intangible services, but even most manufacturers offer services for their products. In fact, the single fastest growing cost section for manufacturers is warranty costs (Helo, Anussornnisarn, & Phusavat, 2008; Ifinedo & Nahar, 2009; Johansson & Sudzina, 2008). Tailgate parties certainly illustrate the growth of entertainment as the focus, as the promotion mix becomes focused socially enjoying the event and engaging the fans outside the sport event. As a diehard