

MARKETING TOOLS FOR SPORTS MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN UNIVERSITIES

Elendu Ifeanyichukwu Christian, Ph.D

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *The university system is a fertile ground for identification, management, and development of sports talents for sports industry. Every industry including sports industry produces and offers products and services to the society. Sports products and services are produced by sportspersons for sports consumers, and this contributes to the socio-economic, political, infrastructural and cultural development of sports in the university and society at large, if well managed and marketed. Sports in universities can be managed and developed using marketing tools such as sponsorship, advertising, sales promotion, publicity and public relations, packaging, branding, merchandising, labeling, personal selling, direct marketing and warranty. The relevance and applicability of these marketing tools to sports management and development have been highlighted. It was recommended that sports marketing tools should be employed by universities for their sports management and developmental efforts and programmes. Experts in sports marketing and management should be integrated into the running of sports in universities. There should be collaboration between practitioners of sports and marketing professions to see how best sports can be marketed to consumers using different marketing tools. Researches on marketing and promotional tools with the aim of discovering more marketing tools and their applicability to sports should be encouraged.*

KEYWORDS: Marketing, Sports Management, Sports Development, University.

INTRODUCTION

Sport is business and every business that is well managed, brings development. One of the developmental programmes and ventures of any development-conscious nation is sports. Orunaboka and Elendu (2009) defined sports as any highly organized physical activity, which has its equipment, definite boundaries and rules made by a professional body. Sports accrues fund to the society through its products and services. Sports equally contribute to the development of manpower or human resources of the society for efficient and effective service delivery in all sectors of the society. The infrastructural, social, economic and cultural impact of hosting mega sports events have contributed to many countries bidding for the hosting right of mega sports events such as Olympics, and World cup.

The developmental properties of sports may not be harnessed if not well managed and marketed using marketing tools. Financial resources required for developmental projects for and in the society could be generated through sports. A country's level of development can be seen in its sports industry. Producers in sport industry need the consumers to remain in business. Pitts and Stotlar (1996) conceptualized sport industry as the market in which the products offered to its buyers are sports, fitness, recreation, or leisure-related and may be activities, goods, services, people, places, or ideas. Sport is a big business and industry with sports products and services for sports consumers. The human and material resources for sports need to be managed and marketed for sports development.

In modern times, developed and developing countries have continued to realize and utilize sports for their socio-economic growth and development through the application of marketing principles, theories and tools. Marketing, according to Kotler (1997), is a social managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others. Marketing is extended to sports. Shilbury and Berriman (1998) viewed sport marketing as the marketing of sport - the use of the marketing mix variables to communicate the benefits of sport participation and spectatorship to potential consumers; and marketing through sport by using sponsorships as a vehicle to promote and advertise their products - usually to specifically identifiable demographic markets. In this paper, sports marketing is the application and practice of marketing ideologies and variables in the sports industry for sports development.

Sports products and services are made available to consumers partly for economic gains, and many countries that hosted mega sports competitions such as World Cup and Olympics had huge amount of money added to their economy and sports industry. Shank (1999) defined sport product as a good, a service, or any combination of the two that is designed to provide benefits to a sport spectator, participant or sponsor.

In sports industry, some marketing tools can be used for sports management and development. Sport management is the application of all concepts, theories, principles, processes, practices and philosophy of management to sport situations, persons, institutions, and events in order to achieve sport goals. Elendu (2012) viewed sports development as a positive improvement and change in the status of sports facilities and equipment, sports organization and administration, welfare of sports personnel, officiating officials, athletes, spectators, and fans irrespective of one's sex, age, religion, race, ethnicity, and economic status, to the realization of sports goals in a given society. He noted that sports development requires the coordination of material and human resources to ensure a safe environment for all citizens to participate and enjoy sports either for recreational or competitive purposes. In the context of this paper, sports development is a gradual, continuous and dynamic transformation or position change of structure and status of athletes, facilities, equipment, sports personnel, fans, spectators, sports associations, sports organization and administration from inexistence to existence, unsatisfactory to satisfactory condition, inadequacy to adequacy, inaccessibility to accessibility, unaffordability to affordability, unavailability to availability, in-proximity to proximity, inefficient and ineffective to efficient and effective participation in sports by all and for all in order to achieve sports goals. Sports is undertaken both as a course and extracurricular activity in educational institutions especially in the universities.

The university system is expected to have standard sports facilities, equipment and human performance laboratory for research, and fitness centre to ensure academic excellence and optimum sports performance for staff and students. The university's sports facilities serve as laboratories, training sites and camp ground for athletes and non-athletes. This in no small measure contributes to student-athletes excelling in athletic performance, winning laurels and medals in national and international sports competitions for the university and country at large. Sports development of any university could be assessed partly based on their ability to successfully host sports competitions such as Nigerian Universities Games Association (NUGA), and West African Universities Games (WAUG). University is one of the sports talent identification and development grounds for students who can represent the nation in international sports competitions. This paper examines how sports can be managed and

developed in universities using marketing tools such as sponsorship, advertising, sales promotion, publicity and public relations, packaging, branding, merchandising, labeling, personal selling, direct marketing and warranty.

Sponsorship as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

Sports usually get various forms of assistance from individual, government and non-governmental organizations through sponsorship. Pope (1998) defined sponsorship as the provision of resources (e.g. money, people, equipment) by an organization (the sponsor) directly to an individual, authority or body (the sponsee), to enable the latter to pursue some activity in return for benefits contemplated in terms of the sponsor's promotion strategy, and which can be expressed in terms of corporate, marketing, or media objectives. Van Heerden (2001) viewed sport sponsorship as a business relationship which is based on an association between sponsors and sponsees with some promotional objectives in mind. He further viewed sport sponsorship as the provision of resources (e.g. money, people, equipment) by an organization (the sponsor) directly to a sponsee (e.g. sport personality, sporting authority or sport body or code), to enable the sponsee to pursue some activity (e.g. participation by the individual or event management by the authority or sport body or code) in return for rights to be included in a sponsorship agreement contemplated in terms of the sponsor's marketing communication strategy and which can be expressed in terms of corporate, marketing, sales and/or media objectives and measured in terms of the linking objectives to the desired outcome in terms of return on investment in monetary and non-monetary terms.

The university through its director of sports can be on sponsorship drive and tour to individuals, companies and non-governmental organizations for assistance in the procurement of sports equipment and construction of sports facilities, training of athletes, sports personnel and organization of sports programmes for competitive or recreational purposes for rapid sports development in the university.

Advertising as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

Sports products and services need to be advertised to the society using both print and electronic media. Advertising refers to any paid, non-personal communication through various media about a business firm, product, or idea by a sponsor identified in a message that intended to inform or persuade members of a particular audience (Eksteen, 2012). He further noted that advertising emphasizes mass media techniques for the delivery of a standardized message. The media include television, radio, magazines, newspaper, among others. Sports can effectively be managed and developed at the university, if the sports ideas, activities programmes and achievements are marketed through advertising in various media establishments both within and outside Nigeria using television broadcast, newspapers, magazines, internet, outdoor media and billboards at strategic areas.

Sales Promotion as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

Sports products and services are sometimes offered for sale using some promotional strategies. Sales promotion refers to short term compensation to encourage the consumer to buy the product. The promotional tools include discount, coupons, displays and demonstrations (Eksteen, 2012). The university can partner and organize sales promotion with sports equipment and supplies manufacturing industries to display and sell their sports products at a high discount rate to the members of the university community and its environs. The university can produce, display and sell customized sports t-shirts, uniforms, caps, sports

stickers, emblems and other sports items at affordable prices using discount technique. In the sales promotion, discounts can be given to ensure that sports persons buy the materials at cheaper or affordable rates. This will encourage more persons to participate in sports in the University.

Publicity and Public Relations as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

One of the means of sensitization or creating awareness of any sports product or service is through publicity and public relations. Publicity differs from advertising in that it is nonpaid, non-personal communication about a product or organization. Often the sponsor is not identified, and the message reaches the public because of its newsworthiness (Gray & McEvoy, 2005). The university through its sports unit, public relation or registrar's office can launch its sports websites through which people can be informed about the sporting activities, programmes and achievements of the university. The university can convey the importance attach to sports in the university through the electronic and print media (both national and international), internet and websites. The university can also use the town criers in nearby communities to publicize its sports programmes. It can equally make announcements in churches and mosques, use posters, flyers, billboards and banners to publicize its sports programmes.

Packaging as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

Patronage of sports product or services is largely influenced by the packaging of those products and services. Gray and McEvoy (2005) noted that packaging is a key factor in successful sport marketing. They further stated that brochures, pamphlets and imagery-related advertising are the essential packaging forms used for spectator sports. The way and manner sports are organized and presented reflect its packaging, and attendance or consumption of sports products services largely depends on packaging. The sports director of the university should use good packaging methods or strategies to attract consumers to its sports programmes. For example, using coupons that are redeemable at sports venues and days in the university, hosting different sporting events ranging from individual, dual and team sports especially during weekends for all staff and students. The university can package the sports events with other sports-related products or entertainment industry like comedy industry by inviting a comedian as an interlude before and during half-time of the sports programme. Attend and get a sports gift strategy can be used to draw many spectators to sports events and thereby increasing the revenue generation for sports in the university. The "pay for one and get one free" strategy can also be used whereby sports gate fee or ticket for a day's match can cover matches for two days. Fee or ticket for a day's sports facility usage can be extended to two days to encourage patronage.

Branding as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

Sport is associated with many brands. Different sporting activities and sports federations or associations have their own unique brands. American Marketing Association (2007) defined brand as a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies the seller's goods or services as distinct from other sellers. According to Kapferer (2004), branding means more than just giving name and signaling to the outside world that such a product or service has been stamped with the mark and imprint of an organization. He noted that branding consists in transforming the product category; it requires a corporate long term involvement, a high

level of resources and skills. The university should through its sports personalities and achievements in winning laurels in both national and international competitions come up with a strong brand that will portray it as a centre or university of sports excellence.

Merchandising as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

There is need to merchandise sports for patronage and consumption. Merchandising is any practice which contributes to the sale of products to retail consumer. Merchandising refers to the variety of products available for sale and the display of those products in such a way that it stimulates interest and entices customers to make a purchase (Wikipedia, 2014). The American marketing Association (2007) asserted that merchandising has two definitions; the first definition emphasizes the promotional activities applied inside stores, like display of their products, and the second one focuses on identifying and choosing correct decisions about products and products portfolio. Special superstores for sales of sports products should be built where engraved sports products and wears produced by the university should be displayed. This will offer interested sports persons an opportunity and avenue to purchase sports equipment and supplies for sports participation and possibly improve their sporting culture and performance. The university can display their sports products on internet for consumers to purchase.

Labeling as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

Sports products are labeled for identification and patronage. Labeling is anything written on the packaging or product or anything else ranging from simple tag or a designed graphics. It is possible that a label only contain brand name of the product or it could contain all the information about the ingredients and use of the product (Kotler, 2001). Any sports equipment or supplies produced by the university should be properly labeled. Sports programmes of the university should be properly labeled and differentiated from the sports programmes of other tertiary institutions within and outside Nigeria.

Personal Selling as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

Sports products and services can be sold through personal selling. Personal selling is a face to face presentation and promotion of products and services. There is a direct interaction between the firm's sales employees and customers (Thujo, 2008). Personal selling involves a seller using product or service information to persuade and convince a prospective customer to buy a product or service that satisfies the customer's needs. The university can employ sports salespersons to sell its sports products (sports shoes, clothings, etc.) and services to potential customers within and outside the university.

Direct Marketing as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

Direct marketing consists of direct connections with carefully targeted individual consumers to both obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting customer relationships (Kotler & Armstrong, 2005). It is the use of consumer-direct channels to reach and deliver goods and services to customers without using marketing middlemen. These channels include direct mail marketing, catalogue marketing, telephone marketing (telemarketing), interactive TV, kiosks marketing, online and website marketing, and mobile devices marketing. The university can use direct mail marketing, catalogue marketing, telephone marketing, kiosk marketing, online/website marketing, and mobile devices marketing to market the sports t-

shirts, sports shoes, and other sports equipment as well as sports programmes of the institution to consumers.

Warranty as a Tool for Sports Management and Development in Universities

Sports products should be accompanied with warranty. Warranty is a seller's assurance to a buyer that a product or service is or shall be as represented (Murthy & Blischke, 1995). The promotional role of warranty is to encourage sales by reducing risks for the consumer. Warranties serve as signals to communicate information about product reliability and performance when consumers cannot evaluate these characteristics easily otherwise. Warranties act as insurance to protect consumers against being defective or poor quality products. The warranty coverage of an item depends on length of warranty period; selling price of the item, and time of failure of the item. If the product fails within the time of warranty from the time of the initial purchase, the seller agrees to repair or provide replacements for failed items free of charge; the seller agrees to refund an amount at selling price; seller agrees to refund the full purchase price, or seller agrees to refund a fraction of the purchase price, among others. In many warranties, there are disclaimers to guard the manufacturer from unreasonable claims from consumers (Murthy & Blischke, 1995). The university through collaboration with sports manufacturing industries can sell the industries' sports products and assure the buyers of the warranty of those products. This will help to boost the economic base of the university and its public relation with the industry thereby contributing to development of sports in the university.

CONCLUSION

Human and material resources for sports need to be harnessed and managed for sports products and services to be marketed to sports consumers using marketing tools. These tools include sponsorship, advertising, sales promotion, publicity and public relations, packaging, branding, merchandising, labeling, personal selling, direct marketing and warranty. Adoption of these marketing tools can contribute immensely to effective and efficient sport management and development in universities.

Recommendations

1. Sports marketing tools should be employed by the universities for sports management and developmental efforts and programmes.
2. Sports marketing and management experts should be integrated into the running of sports in universities.
3. There should be collaboration between those in sports and marketing professions to see how best sports can be marketed to consumers using different marketing tools.
4. Researches on marketing and promotional tools with the aim of discovering more marketing tools and their applicability to sports should be encouraged.

REFERENCES

- American Marketing Association (2007). Definition of brand (AMA Dictionary). Accessed from http://www.marketingpower.com/_layouts/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=B
- Eksteen, E. (2012). *Sports development, law and commercialization*. Accessed from bookboon.com
- Elendu, I. C. (2012). Nigeria's debased values system at the modern era: Implications for sports development. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3(3), 48 - 53.
- Gray, D. P. & McEvoy, C. D. (2005). Sport marketing: Strategies and tactics. In B. L. Parkhouse, (Ed.), *The management of Sport: Its Foundation and Application*. (4th ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill Higher Education.
- Kapferer, J. N. (2004). *The new strategic brand management. Creating and sustaining brand equity long term*. London: Kogan Page.
- Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2005). *Principles of marketing*. (11th ed.). London: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Kotler, P. (1997). *Marketing management - Analysis, planning, implementation, and control*. (9th ed.) New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Kotler, P. (2001). *Marketing management*. (2nd ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Meek, A. (1995). An estimate of the size and supported economic activity of the sports industry in the United States. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 6(4), 15 - 21.
- Murthy, D. N. P. & Blischke, W. R. (Eds.)(1995). A framework for the study of warranty. In D. N. P. Murthy & W. R. Blischke. *Product Warranty Handbook* (PP 47 - 72). New York: Marcel Dekker Inc.
- Orunaboka, T. T. & Elendu, I. C. (2009). Introduction to Human Kinetics. In I. M. Aminigo (Ed.). *Model Essays in Education* (pp. 138 - 155). Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Pitts, B. G., & Stotlar, D. K. (1996). *Fundamentals of sport marketing*. USA: Fitness Information Technology.
- Pope, N. (1998). Overview of current sponsorship thought. *Cyber-Journal of Sport Marketing*, 2(1). Retrieved from <http://www.ejasm.com/>
- Shank, M. D. (1999). *Sports marketing - A strategic perspective*. USA: Prentice Hall.
- Shilbury, D., & Berriman (1998). Sponsorship awareness: A study of St. Kilda football club supporters. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 5(1), 27 - 35.
- Thuo, J. K. (2008). *Principles of marketing: A skill-building approach*. (2nd ed.). Nairobi, Kenya: Acrodile Publishing.
- Van Heerden, C. H. (2001). *Factors affecting decision-making in South African sport sponsorships*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria.
- Wikipedia (2014). Merchandizing. Accessed from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merchandising>