

Noco united soccer academy essay sample

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Wesley Diekens came to the United States from the U. K. in 2002 on a soccer scholarship. Wesley grew up playing soccer on many competitive teams through high school and had a brief professional career in England. When St. Albans College recruited him to play soccer, he thought it would open his life to a grand adventure. That adventure changed his life. While at St. Albans, Diekens met his future wife, Alyce Bilski, who also played soccer there. She graduated a year ahead of him and went to Fort Collins, Colorado, where she played on the semiprofessional Fort Collins Force women’s soccer team. When Diekens finished college, he followed Bilski to northern Colorado. Bilski was captain of the Force and worked for the sports marketing company that owned the team. Diekens got a job at a local meat packing plant, but soccer was his passion. He made the practice squad for the Colorado Rapids Major League Soccer team, but injuries cut his professional career short. Teaching soccer to kids became another passion for Diekens. He has a natural talent for coaching. Diekens is charismatic, kids enjoy his easygoing demeanor and British accent, and he really knows soccer and how to teach the game to youngsters. In 2006, Diekens founded the NOCO United Soccer Academy (NOCO standing for NOrthern COlorado). At first he trained small groups of young players aged 7 to 14. He grouped them by age, gender, and skill and conducted training sessions for small groups of five to seven at a local park. The first kids he attracted came by word of mouth as they quickly told friends and teammates about “ this British guy who teaches soccer and makes it fun.” His small after-school camps quickly grew to include more than 50 kids. Word continued to get around, and by the following summer Diekens conducted 10 different camps—and quit his job at

the meat packing plant. He also trained 11 different NOCO United 3v3 soccer teams that competed in tournaments across the state and nation during the summer. All of his players had bright blue jerseys with the NOCO United name across the front, and the success of these teams made the jerseys a great promotion vehicle. In 2008, four of his teams competed in the national 3v3 soccer tournament, with one winning a national championship. To keep up with the rapid growth, Diekens brought a few friends over from England to assist with training. Will Bowman moved to the United States to become Diekens's assistant director of coaching. Diekens and Bowman planned to work year-round as trainers and hire a couple of local coaches to help them conduct training sessions. During the summer he added a couple of local college soccer players and a few former teammates from England.

The summer season works well for his British mates, because that is the off-season for those still playing professionally. Diekens is confident he can hire and train more coaches if he needs them to handle future growth. Youth soccer is big in Colorado and across much of the United States. It is the largest participation sport for kids. Fort Collins is a soccer hotbed, and this has helped Diekens's business grow. He now trains about 600 kids per year. But he has even greater ambitions. For example, he would like to build a training facility; the space he currently rents is not always well-suited to soccer. However, he figures he would need to double his business to justify the cost of the soccer complex he wants to build. So he is now wondering how to grow his business. About 90 percent of his current customers live in Fort Collins, which has a population of about 125, 000 people.

Diekens believes awareness of his program is close to 100 percent among

competitive soccer players ages 11 to 14—and is probably at about 40 percent among families with soccer-playing kids ages 6 to 10. Most of his customers are 10 to 13 years old and enroll in two to three NOCO United programs per year. He has also run a few camps in Boulder and Northglenn, which are about 50 miles from Fort Collins. These have been successful but are currently limited. There are several small cities within 25 miles of Fort Collins. Loveland, a city of about 60, 000, borders Fort Collins on the south. Greeley and Longmont, each with about 80, 000 people, are about 25 miles away by interstate highway. These areas have very limited soccer training programs except for their competitive teams, and awareness of NOCO United is not very high. Those who have heard of his academy are often not familiar with its philosophy and programs. Diekens is not sure if parents in these communities would be willing to drive their kids to Fort Collins for training. If not, he would have to run his programs there. Diekens knows that he wants to grow his business, but wonders how he can accomplish his goal. He currently sees a few options: 1. His current customer retention rate is pretty high: about 80 percent. However, when the kids reach 14 or 15 years old, other high school sports and activities make them less interested in extra soccer training. One option is to try to increase retention by developing programs targeted at kids over 14. 2. Another option is to develop a marketing strategy that would encourage his current customers to buy more. He wonders if they have other needs that he might be able to serve. 3. Diekens could try to grow the business by entering new markets and acquiring new customers. His market penetration with kids 6 to 9 years old is still quite modest. He might develop new programs to better meet this

group's needs. 4. Another new market option would be to serve more kids from Loveland, Longmont, and Greeley. Evaluate Diekens's different options for growing NOCO United's customer equity.

Develop a set of marketing strategy ideas for each of the options. What could Diekens do for market research to better assess his options? NOCO Soccer Academy Jermain Dyer has many good ideas to market his soccer academy; however he needs to obtain a marketing orientation and target groups in order to obtain his final goal of building a soccer complex. He has many good ideas for expanding his academy but he also has ideas that are not going to help him expand in a positive way. The current customer retention rate is eighty percent, which is very good; his problem is after the kids turn fourteen and fifteen they do not return to the soccer academy. In order for Jermain to keep the kids in his academy he will need to obtain a marketing orientation, identify target groups and conduct extensive research before making any big moves. Although Jermain has many different age groups that come to his soccer academy which are; ages six-nine, ages ten to thirteen and ages fourteen and over, this study will be examining the age group of ten to thirteen.

This is the age group that contains most of his customers, but this is also the group that does not return. A marketing orientation will identify the needs and wants of this age group by exploring the product, price, promotion and place to obtain revenue and success for Jermain's soccer academy. At the ages of ten to thirteen the needs of these players will be to continue to learn the rules, regulations and fundamentals of soccer. The wants of them will be to have a good time and gain dedication to a sport that Jermain has dedicated his life to. There would be three different sessions to

attend; players would have to attend each session to get a full learning experience. The sessions would be three to six weeks and could be paid for in full or by session. Each week there would be two learning sessions and possibly a game or scrimmage at least once a week. At the end of these sessions, each player could have the opportunity to participate in a tournament. To promote his academy, Jermain needs to offer discounts to his players to please the parents as well as...