

Marketing a sports organization

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



When watching football on television, we get so sidetracked in the game and in the players that we forget about another part of the team. The marketing team is a large part of the sports team. Without the group of people who help get the recognition, sales, promotions, the football team would have a more difficult time surviving.

The marketing mix is one of the most often used phrases in marketing. The four marketing tactics, also known as the four “ P’s,” are price, product, place, and promotion. Marketingteacher.com compares the marketing mix to that of a cake mix. All of the ingredients are essential to having the positive outcome that is desired. If the cake needs more sugar, you can add more sugar, if it needs more milk, you can add more milk. The same thing applies to the marketing mix. Perhaps the price needs to be altered for that positive outcome. Any of the tactics can be altered to suit the product and to get the outcome that is desired.

When applying the marketing mix, the kind of organization that we are dealing with has to be considered. There is a difference between an amateur sports organization and a professional sports organization. In order to properly assess the commonalties and differences among the marketing mix developed for Diving Canada (Amateur Sport Organization) and the Toronto Blue Jays (Professional Sport Organization), it is imperative that one has a true understanding of the four elements that drives the marketing mix. The marketing mix was developed as a means to provide marketers with a strategy that would allow them to blend together various factors in order to achieve an organization’s objectives.

To successfully implement this strategy, marketers must address the four specific tactics, or “ ingredients” that will make the strategy work.

Price is the factor that allows marketers to add value (a numerical representation) on the goods and services they are offering based on their ability to stimulate demand. Product on the other hand, refers to the tangible (good) physical aspect or service that encompasses such things as; brand name, functionality or packaging.

Conversely, place relates to the specific geographical location that marketers feel is most appropriate to distribute their product/service to the general public. In order to engage in a successful deliverance, marketers must properly plan tactful promotional strategies that will inform their targeted market with the necessary information to make a purchase. If the aforementioned is utilized effectively, marketers will be able to achieve their organization’s goal in an efficient and productive manner

According to www.wharton.universia.net, Juan Manuel de Toro, a professor at the IESE business school said that marketing for a sport’s organization should be, “ Orientated toward consumers. It’s about thinking, deciding and acting in terms of the final consumer.” He said that as a result to this, “ you have to know who your consumers are, and what they want and need. As much as possible, you have to tailor your offer to their needs, so you can get to know them and provide them with a worthwhile benefit. The orientation is toward the market, not to the product.”

For instance, diving is growing to be very popular in Canada. According to www.diving.ca/english/html/about.htm, Canada is the number one diving nation in the world.

Emphasizing that Canada is known for its diving is important. This will appeal to the emotional aspect of the marketing. It gives a sense of pride. When it comes to sports, pride sells.

There are many organizations that would like to partner with one of the sports that Canada is known for. Sponsorship can make or break a sports marketing plan. Because the team is not necessarily a business and has different purposes than a business does, the marketing for a sports team is different.

People watch sports for entertainment, and largely for the emotional aspect of it. There is some emotional reason why each person becomes passionate for sports. Whether it was a family sport for some, or whether they were athletes in the sport when younger, the customer has a reason. To successfully market, the marketing team must get into the heads of their customers and find out what that reason is.

According to www.wharton.universia.net, Toro said, “ You are dealing with more than just a service; the sports consumer is looking for entertainment, diversion, passion, emotion; you have to consider his complete emotional dedication.” Sandro Rosell, who is the vice-president the Futbol Club Barcelona, argued, “ In sports marketing, it is very hard to bring business needs and emotional needs together.” Although Rosell is right, it is hard to

do, it is possible. For an amateur organization, the price can be a big problem. There will be less money for marketing when the organization is amateur. What is used has to be used wisely.

When seeking a partnership, there are a couple of options. Public or private organizations or state and local partnerships are often considered. One organization that would most likely be used for Diving Canada would be FINA, the world's largest organization for aquatic sports.

The sponsorship covers part of the price aspect. To gain a good idea of the price, penetration pricing could be considered. Penetration pricing is when the price is set low, on purpose, until interest is gained and then the price is raised higher. This would probably be a good idea for Diving Canada.

Because it is an amateur sport, some customers might be a little leery of supporting it; however, because it is a sport that Canada is known for, they will most likely support it if the price is right. Once they begin supporting it and see how positive it is for them, the price can be raised and they will not refuse.

Promotion for an amateur sports organization can be somewhat tricky.

Sponsorship is found in promotion as well as the price. Without the sponsors supporting the team, it is difficult to have the promotion that is necessary.

Since Diving Canada's organization is more about achievement than money, they are not as well known as the Blue Jays.

According to http://pr.e-agency.com/pdf/sports_division.pdf, one way to promote a team like the Diving Canada is to have a website devoted to them where they would gain large exposure. While this does cost extra money, the website believes that the price would be worth it in the end.

A professional sport organization such as the Toronto Blue Jays is an association that is part of a much larger family that stretches across North America. These organizations are limited in the amount of teams that are able to compete and encompass a huge consumer database consisting of fans, spectators, participants, employees, sponsorship companies and much more.

The Toronto Blue Jays, a Toronto based baseball team, is one of the thirty members of this professional sport organization. Diving Canada on the other hand is considered to be a non for profit amateur sport that was created to facilitate the growth and development of diving as a sport in Canada.

Although not as large or consumer driven, Diving Canada represents nine provincial diving associations consisting of sixty seven local diving clubs with over 4, 000 performing athletes.

The main goal of diving Canada is to “ become the number one diving nation in the world.” Unlike the Toronto Blue Jays Association who are profit driven, Diving Canada’s mission is to “ provide all divers, from entry level participants to Olympic and World champions, with the programs and services required to achieve personal excellence and self fulfillment.”

Before distinguishing the differences and commonalities of their respective marketing mixes, it is important to understand the underlying differences between a professional and an amateur.

Professionals, who participate in sports organizations such as the Toronto Blue Jays are usually required to encompass a large array of knowledge achieved through intensive training and practicing. These individuals often have a large affect on society and are required to exploit their independence both in society and in the workplace. Furthermore, the single largest distinction between an amateur and a professional is the funding for the sport. Professionals are paid individuals who are part of a large organization, and are paid based on their active participation. Amateurs, on the other hand usually refers to individuals who are not performing for money, but instead are doing so for self interest usually through an academic setting.

Now that the differences between a paid professional and a working amateur, have been distinguished we discussion of the differences and similarities among the marketing mix can be continued.

Sports “ products” is the first part of the marketing mix that will be analyzed and discussed in relation to both The Toronto Blue Jays and Diving Canada.

A sport product consists of a good or a service that is created for the purpose of providing a benefit to its many existing users (participants, sponsorship companies, spectators etc...). It can provide physical benefits which can be seen through its; its quality design, features, packaging, variety or it can

provide intangible benefits, such as the excitement and thrill participants acquire when watching or attending their favorite sport game.

Although Diving Canada is an amateur sport they share many of the same existing users. Both organizations have many participants providing entertainment for their fans (their consumers), while following specific rules and guidelines governed by officials, instructors, coaches, etc. Furthermore, both engage in acquiring sponsorships as a means to provide excess cash to run a successful event.

Regarding the intangible benefits, there are many similarities as both organizations are providing entertainment for their spectators. However, one of the main differences is that participants in Diving Canada are competing for self-fulfillment (not getting paid), opposed to many of the players on the Toronto Blue Jays who participate for the swollen salary.

Although both organizations are very competitive in nature, Diving Canada places a much larger emphasis on achieving personal excellence and self-satisfaction (individually) while the Toronto Blue Jays place a large emphasis on winning a championship as a whole rather than individual participation.

Regarding the tangible aspects, there are many differences among the two organizations. There is much more variety offered by the Toronto Blue Jays seen through; the different field positions played (short stop, centre field, catcher, pitcher), equipment (bats, helmets, uniforms, gloves), demographics and viewing capabilities (radio, TV). Although, there is variety in Diving Canada, participants have limited equipment such as bathing suits or

goggles, they differ by having much less exposure. TV and radio promotions are limited.

The quality of entertainment is usually higher in professional sports, but can be too complex to judge as entertainment can only be judged in the eye of the beholder.

Although both organizations design their sport wear to embody company logos, the Toronto Blue Jays place a much larger emphasis on its uniqueness as a way to drive sales and attract consumer purchases of uniforms, hats, gloves, etc...One of the biggest differences recognized among the two organizations is the brand name which is perceived through their logos.

The Toronto Blue Jays have a much more distinguished and recognized logo compared to Diving Canada. Although Diving Canada does have a signature logo, recognized as widely as the Toronto Blue Jays due to the limited exposure, demand and publicity for the event.

The largest difference between the Blue Jays and Diving Canada is money. However, in the words of Shaquille O'Neal, " I'm tired of hearing about money, money, money, money, money. I just want to play the game, drink Pepsi, [and] wear Reebok."

Though the two sports are extremely different in marketing, it is interesting to see how the same formula -- price, place, promotion, and product, can be tailored to work successfully for both.

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