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Package

Marketing for Female Sports Participation

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RECL 3P45: Campus Recreation

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April 5, 2010

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Recommendations for Improvement

Male athletics has always been an area that society has taken pride. At the university level, male athletes are tremendously more advertised for than females. Through our review of literature (Appendix A) we found that almost all the pictures in newspapers and articles that talked about varsity sports at the university were coverage of men's sporting events and accomplishments. In most cases, newspapers run by students would completely nullify the legitimacy of women's sporting performance. Through our research we found that marketing for women in sports is not something that is easily accomplished. Marketing for women can be a difficult task because of the lack of interest in women sports by both males and other females not participating. When society first examines females, they are often thought of in a context outside of sports. Advertising of women in media today is often for beauty, fashion, and even in more provocative ways that place ideas in the minds of females that are untrue or unhealthy of the body. It is the job of our female athletes and marketing teams to begin the evolution of female athletes as more prominent, positive role models for females of all ages.

Overall, our literature review (Appendix A) left certain facts present about ways to go about marketing for female sports participation. Marketers should offer personalized instruction in a setting addressing socially compatible females; ideally to establish friends. There should be an atmosphere of fun and assurance that participants will retain their femininity. Marketing

should also take place in areas of interest particularly female driven, such as fashion. Finally, we found that the use of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter help in advertising as these are very accessible and are becoming increasingly popular.

When looking back on the difficulty of marketing sports for women there are some key issues that need to be addressed. These include finding the target market and putting forward a huge marketing frontier towards them. Find out proper ways to get the word out to people on different women's athletics. As talked about earlier younger girls these days mostly look up to actresses and pop star singers as their idols and role models. We think that female athletes can also play an important role in the lives of young women of all ages. Women athletes are inspirational, athletic, overcome discrimination, and deal with many other hardships in sports. This to young women should show them how strong women athletes have to be to fight for everything they have and want. Even in a school, setting university female athletes can be very big role models to those female athletes in high school. Something as simple as university female athletes making visit to different high schools in their area would help boost the confidence of other women thus increasing the number of female athletes. This would also lead to more competitive tryout for female teams creating the best possible competition between women in sports.

We also believe that all schools should take on the marketing scheme of using photos of females participating in athletics, recreational, and different fitness activities on websites and promotional materials. As internet access is becoming more popular, it is a great way for advertising. Females that have interest in participating can access these websites in the comfort of their homes and see first hand other females participating in activities. This presents other females with a great opportunity and perhaps the motivation needed of seeing friends, or simply other females, participating. On-line advertising is also very cost effective as opposed to printing flyers and promotional material. Finally, on-line marketing allows for advertisers to reach a global audience at a fast speed, which allows for extensive exposure.

Similarly, because of the easy access of the internet and new technology Facebook and Twitter are becoming more enticing as an advertising scheme. These social networks also give females of all ages the comfort of accessing these networks in the comfort of their homes. It is also free to sign up for Facebook and Twitter and many people, both male and female, already access these sites. Advertising on the side bars of these websites is also available at low costs. Another benefit of social networking is that they can be updated easily at any time of day in comparison to university websites. They provide up-to-date information and also allow the participants currently involved to lend their voice in awareness.

Finally, a marketing scheme that we found ideal is that revealed by the University of Regina. The University of Regina not only advertises for females in the university but also for the younger females from the community. They offer a program called “Girls in the Game” for girls ages 5-10 to focus on skills necessary to be successful in both competitive and non-competitive sports. If all universities held programs available for females of all ages in the community, they can begin marketing at a young age and encourage participation as they grow. This also leads to the idea of having universities make partnerships with female athletic and recreational programs in the community. By doing so, the universities and community organizations are encouraging participation, providing awareness, and getting maximum use of all facilities available.

All in all, we have found that advertising for female sports participation is there but it is just not as visible as we would like it to be. Marketers seem to have an idea of they want to portray to females but it is just not prominent enough. Recommendations for stronger marketing and advertising that we found would be successful are to find the target market and reach out to them with real, female participants. We also found that as internet is becoming more popular and easier to access, on-line advertising needs to be used as much as possible, as well as the use of social networking such as Facebook and Twitter. Finally, if universities make partnerships within

the community, awareness and participation can be increased to those not only at the university level but also to younger and older females.

Appendix A: Literature Review

Male athletics has always been something society prides in. Men's sports at the university level were tremendously more advertised and spoken about in the school newspaper than women sports. Christine, Dallarie, Mackay & Steph (2009) found that almost all the pictures in newspapers and articles that talked about varsity sports at the university were coverage of men's sports. There were very few articles or pictures of women varsity teams. Many studies have found that men's sports were also more featured on the front page of the newspaper if something big had happened in sports but women sports were very rarely found on the front page of the newspaper. In most cases the newspaper run by students would completely nullify the legitimacy of women's sporting performance. When articles are written about both male and female varsity athletes or games more length and detail is given to the men varsity sports.

However, many have found how the TV coverage of women's sports has changed significantly over the past thirty years. For many years now women's involvement in being spectators and fans of sports has been on the rise. More women are watching sports whether it is male or female sporting events. One popular sport that more females are starting to watch is the superbowl. A study was done and showed that 45% of NFL fans in 2008 were women (McCarthy, 2008). There have been advertisement ads such as beauty products like dove to advertise the superbowl towards women. The NFL has also made memorabilia special for

women, which was a big step in women marketing to get women more involved in sports. For many sporting events such as the Olympics surprisingly women come out as the majority of viewers for the Olympics. According to the article dozens of marketers use the Olympic games to reach out to females including companies such as AT&T, McDonalds, and L'Oreal. Female athletes have also been put into these ads to entice more female viewers.

Nike has also been launching new ads for women in sports supporting women viewers and women athletes all around the world. Nike recently put in over four hundred thousand dollars into new ads that were marketed towards women. The new ads were in light of some older ads that Nike aired in 1995 were girls and women showed the benefits of organized sports. The new push for these ads for women came after a racist and sexist remark about the women's basketball team at Rutgers University. Nike interviewed some female high school athletes that stated that they do not feel as respected as their male counterparts. They want all female athletes and viewers of sport to be respected and not have racist and sexist remarks made about them. Nike wanted to hear from women who overcame sexist remarks and stereotypes in order to push these new ads so that women can rise over these terrible stereotypes and become stronger as a whole. Nike acknowledges that women and sports is a big market for them to market themselves in and they are heading in the right direction to making women sports bigger in today's world (Howard, 2007).

In 2004 after a gold medal win for the American women's basketball team down in Athens, the WNBA decided to put on a marketing campaign with three of the biggest WNBA stars. The marketing partners included got milk, Dell, Foot Locker and expansion of an already existing deal with Nike. The WNBA feels that these marketing campaigns and partners will strengthen the people who view WNBA and female spectators of WNBA games. A poll that was taken by the WNBA showed that 90% of spectators who go to WNBA use sponsorship items (Janoff, 2004). It was also the big gold medal win in Athens in the summer that had a huge affect on this marketing campaign. It got the name out there for women athletes and women sports. After watching the most televised sports games in the world, women who watched the women's USA basketball team win gold are now more inclined to watch them in the WNBA and invest there time in women athletes. Similarly, after the Summer Olympics faded from the public eye, advertisements towards woman greatly increased. Jennie Finch, star pitcher for the gold medal U.S. softball team, has been on a marketing fast track. She was on the cover of Modern Bride's December issue and was grand marshal of the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl parade. She was also the first sports- tie in with The Sak, a San Francis-co handbag maker. In efforts to market towards the female spectators Finch will also be in print with Glamour, Teen Vogue, Lucky, Marie Claire and InStyle (Janoff, 2005).

Although more advertising and marketing is being done towards females, in the current age

attractiveness has become more of a focal point for endorsements. Cunningham, Fink, and Kensicki (2004) believe that the characteristics of effective spokespersons for marketing include expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Cuneen, Ridinger and Ross (2009) found that women in motocross have been moving towards physical attractiveness. Many advertising images of contemporary race car drivers portray the dual-role of attractiveness and athleticism. Strong and competent women athletes are becoming more and more accepted by society, perhaps more than strong and competent male athletes? It was also found that the expert female endorser built stronger association with the sporting event than the attractiveness of an endorser. They also found the best marketing occurs when the athlete of combination of athletes are the best fit for the particular event in relation to the particular audience. Also, more ticket sales occur when the audience has positive attitudes towards the sport and high levels of identification with the event.

Overall it has been found that marketers should offer personalized instructions in a setting addressing socially compatible females, ideally to establish friends; there should be an atmosphere of fun and assurance the participants will retain their femininity (Ricker, 2006). Marketing should also take place in areas of interest particularly female driven, such as fashion.

References

Christine, Dallarrie, Mackay & Steph. (2009). Campus newspaper coverage of varsity sports. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 44(1), 25-40.

Cuneen, J., Ridinger, L. & Ross, S. (2009). Drivers to divas: Advertising images of women in motorsport. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, 10(3), 204-214.

Cunningham, G., Fink, J., & Kensicki, L. (2004). Using athletes as endorsers to sell women's sport: Attractiveness vs. expertise. *Journal of Sport Management*, 18, 350-367.

Howard, Theresa. (2007). Nike serves up new ads supporting women. *USA Today*.

Janoff, Barry. (2004). WNBA Builds Marketing Roster. *Brandweek*, 45(31).

Janoff, Barry. (2005). NBA marketers seek net gains: Catching up with Jennie Finch. *Brandweek*, 46(2).

McCarthy, Michael, (2008). Marketers Alter Their Pitch. *USA Today*.

Ricker, Kat. (2006). Marketing bodybuilding competitions for females. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, 7(2), 136-142.

Appendix B: Documents

For this component of the research study, Carleton University, Humber College, University of Regina, University of New Brunswick, and University of Windsor were contacted and researched to determine how they go about marketing for female's sports participation.

Carleton University

The only person we were able to directly speak with was Jennifer Brenning who is the director of the department of recreation and athletics. She informed us that they “do not have a specific marketing campaign targeting women. [They] have a balance of photos on all of our publications and promotional materials (posters, activity guide, website etc.). And [they] do offer some women only programs such as the "women's only swim" and "self defense for women", Co-ed intramurals where there is a ratio required in terms of gender balance, and a "women's only intramural hockey, basketball, soccer, volleyball leagues". These do fill up but not to the same numbers as the men's intramural programs”. Jennifer states, “the majority of female participation comes in the instructional programs such as yoga, pilates, dance, group fitness. While the men participate more in the team sports and the fitness centre generally have more males participating (weights etc.)”.

1. <http://www2.carleton.ca/goravens/clubs/fastpitch/>
2. <http://www2.carleton.ca/goravens/clubs/rugby/>
3. <http://www2.carleton.ca/goravens/goravens/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/ravens-insider-12.pdf>
4. <http://www2.carleton.ca/athletics/intramurals/basketball/>
5. <http://www2.carleton.ca/athletics/intramurals/soccer/>

Humber College

We found that Humber has a wide variety of intramurals and extramurals specifically for females. We also found that the college strongly supports female athletic achievement, such as golfer Maggie Trainor. On the website for athletics and recreation there were many more women participating in fitness and well-being rather than men. This is also a strong advertising scheme.

1. <http://www.humberathletics.ca/index.php?TS=211&M=m>
2. <http://www.humberathletics.ca/index.php?TS=197&M=m>
3. http://athletics.humber.ca/indoor_soccer_w/index.htm

University of Regina

University of Regina also offers many intramural activities for women only. They also offer specific times for women's only swimming. An interesting finding from the University of Regina was that they not only advertise for females in the university but also for the younger

females from the community, They offer a program called “Girls in the Game” for girls ages 5-10 to focus on skills necessary to be successful in both competitive and non-competitive sports.

1. <http://www.uregina.ca/recreativeservices/intramurals/Leagues/Floor%20Hockey/Women%27s%20Floor%20Hockey/>
2. <http://www.uregina.ca/recreativeservices/sportclubs/softball/index.html>
3. http://www.uregina.ca/recreativeservices/Girls%20in%20the%20Game/index_Girls_in_the_Game.html

University of New Brunswick

University of New Brunswick offered many one-day tournaments for women, such as indoor soccer. They also offer female only strength training fitness classes that just recently become established in February of this year. UNB also strongly advertises and recognises the women’s ringette team through the university’s website, the team website, and social networks such as Facebook. They also offer a women’s hockey club which is organized and advertised similarly to the women’s ringette team.

One interesting thing we found about the University of New Brunswick was that all of their intramurals were Co-Ed, none specifically for men or women. This is very unusual but it may also help with female participation and acceptance in different recreational activities.

1. <http://www.unbsj.ca/athletics/>

2. <http://campusrec.unbf.ca/intramurals/documents/SportManual2009.pdf>
3. http://campusrec.unbf.ca/fitness/schedules_class_descript.html#strength
4. <http://www.unbsj.ca/athletics/fitness/classes.html>
5. <http://unbringette.tripod.com/index.html>
6. <http://www.unbsj.ca/athletics/clubs/whockey.html>

University of Windsor

The University of Windsor was interesting to research. We found that the only intramural specific for women at the university was hockey. However, the photos they use to advertise were all women, for example the photo used for the athletic scholarship page. This may be more enticing for women to apply and continue in sports and recreational activities. Although the only intramural for women is hockey, the university feels very strong about their varsity athletics, which is clear once accessing the varsity website. Their women's basketball team won OUA's and are being recognized greatly. They also recognize a female athlete of the week. Finally, the University of Windsor also uses Facebook and Twitter to advertise their recreational and athletics, which is a smart scheme as these social networks are dominant in our society.

1. <http://web4.uwindsor.ca/units/athletics/intramurals/sports.nsf/inToc/9ACD9661BFF5A95385256E8C00683142?OpenDocument>
2. http://www.golancers.ca/news/2010/2/22/WHOCKEY_0222105932.aspx

3. http://www.golancers.ca/news/2010/4/1/WBB_0401100745.aspx
4. http://www.golancers.ca/news/2010/3/14/WBB_0314103109.aspx
5. <http://www.golancers.ca/sports/2009/7/30/Athletic%20Scholarship%20Info.aspx>

