

# Sports Business Program

## **Marketing Your School Sports, Entertainment & Events**

**Fourth Edition**







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# A SPORTS BUSINESS SUCCESS STORY

"WE BEGAN THE YEAR WITH A JOB INTERVIEW PROCESS LAID OUT FOR US BY SCC'S SPORTS BUSINESS PROGRAM. AS WE BEGAN TO PROGRESS THROUGH THE MATERIAL, ONE OF OUR BHS STUDENTS, SUFFERED A STROKE OF THE SPINAL CORD. IN AN EFFORT TO ASSIST HIS FAMILY WITH RISING MEDICAL COSTS, OUR MARKETING CLASS STUDENTS WANTED TO DO SOMETHING TO HELP. THEY INTERVIEWED FOR SPECIFIC TEAM POSITIONS (MERCHANDISE, PROMOTION, SPONSORSHIP, FINANCE, MARKETING, PUBLIC RELATIONS) AND THEY WERE REQUIRED TO PRESENT IDEAS DURING THEIR INTERVIEW WHICH MADE THEM THE BEST CANDIDATES FOR THAT TEAM. ONCE THE 'ORGANIZATION' WAS COMPLETE, THE TEAMS SET OUT TO CREATE, DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR HIM.

WHAT STARTED OUT AS AN IDEA TO JUST HELP OUT A FAMILY BECAME A HUGE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT. IN ADDITION TO OBTAINING TELEVISION, RADIO AND NEWSPAPER COVERAGE, WE WOUND UP TEAMING WITH A LOCAL CHURCH TO HOST THE 'PLAY FOR PATRICK' FUNDRAISING EVENT. OUR GOAL WAS TO RAISE \$5,000 AND WE ACTUALLY RAISED OVER \$7,400 AND COUNTING. OUR LOCAL COLLEGE, VIRGINIA TECH, ALSO BECAME INVOLVED AND ULTIMATELY NOMINATED PATRICK IN DODGE'S GRABLIFE-GIVELIFE.COM ONLINE FUNDRAISER. PATRICK WON THE CONTEST, ALONG WITH \$20,000, IN JUST 14 DAYS. AFTER WRAPPING UP THE FUNDRAISER, ONE PARENT TOLD ME HE KNEW THAT PARTICIPATING IN THIS EVENT WAS MORE THAN WHAT MY SON WOULD EVER BE EXPOSED TO IN COLLEGE—AND THE PARENT IS A COLLEGE PROFESSOR!

THANKS FOR GIVING US A ROADMAP FOR ORGANIZING A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE FOR ALL THOSE INVOLVED!"

- KIM RADFORD, MARKETING TEACHER AT BLACKSBURG HIGH SCHOOL IN VIRGINIA

## CREATING YOUR SUCCESS STORY

There have been many success stories resulting from the adoption and implementation of the Sports Business Program at high schools around the country. But like a snowflake, no two programs will look alike. Success can be measured in many forms, determined by the goals you set when creating the foundation for your Sports Business Program.

Will your accomplishments be measured by the increase in revenue resulting from a successful sponsorship sales campaign? Or will you achieve success when the stands are packed with fans, all wearing merchandise designed by students in your class? Perhaps your program's biggest accomplishment will be through a kickball, golf or bowling event that raised awareness and money for charity.

There is no right or wrong way to implement the Sports Business Program at your school, but this guide will help you establish the infrastructure necessary for achieving success. As long as you are committed to building and growing your program, success is inevitable. As the famous marketing slogan says, just do it!

# INTRODUCTION

“THE SPORTS BUSINESS PROGRAM PROVIDES HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH AN EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN THE INS AND OUTS OF THE SPORTS BUSINESS WORLD IN A “HANDS ON” ENVIRONMENT. I WOULD ENCOURAGE ANY STUDENT WITH AN INTEREST IN SPORTS MARKETING TO GET INVOLVED AS SOON AS THEY CAN.”

- MIKE EGAN, GENERAL MANAGER AT PITT IMG SPORTS MARKETING

It takes luck to find a career in sports and entertainment, right? Not necessarily. It has been said that “luck happens when preparation meets opportunity.” Sports Career Consulting's Sports Business Program (SBP) is specifically designed to provide students with the necessary preparation for when the opportunity comes. The SBP is for schools that wish to provide their students with “real world” experience by simulating the same basic business models used by collegiate athletic departments, professional sports teams and event management companies while providing a valuable sports and entertainment business education.

The goals of this program focus on providing sports and entertainment business education and work experience for your students. By taking the necessary steps for implementing the Sports Business Program at your school you will:

1. Offer an opportunity for students to gain valuable “hands-on” sports, event and entertainment business experience in a unique and exciting learning environment
2. Provide a fun and entertaining atmosphere for your fans while enhancing the student athlete experience by packing the stands at school events
3. Raise funds for your educational and extracurricular programs, charities and/or school athletic department

By carefully reviewing the material presented in this teacher's guide, you will achieve these goals by gaining an understanding of the professional sports and university athletics traditional business model. We refer to this infrastructure throughout the guide as the sports business model. While the program has a clear sports business and marketing-based emphasis, the model can easily be adapted to assist in promoting school entertainment (e.g. school play) and events (e.g. charity golf tournament).

The fast-paced, exciting world of sports and entertainment can open doors to many different career paths. Teams, schools and organizations employ individuals with numerous areas of expertise ranging from accounting and marketing, to coaching and athletic training, to digital marketing/social media and graphic design.

According to Keri Stoller, former Manager of Community Investment for the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies, “The draw to work in the world of professional sports remains as strong and competitive as ever, evidenced by the high volume of resumes and inquires I receive every year from individuals looking for an opportunity to get their foot in the door. When I interview, I look for self-motivated people who have experience in the field so I can feel confident that they have a feel for the expectations and demands of a job in our field.” Discussions with other industry executives involved in the hiring process reveal the same standard. There is no doubt that the trend of a high demand for jobs in sports, events and entertainment will continue for years to come.

To assist with your program development, executives from many top professional teams, athletic and apparel brands and university athletic programs offer valuable insight on the industry's most successful practices. Refer to the "Marketing Tips from Industry Executives" section online for advice on building and managing your Sports Business Program. Please remember that you will need to log in to access this feature.

# INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

"I WOULD RECOMMEND TO ANY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WITH AN INTEREST IN THIS INDUSTRY TO DIP THEIR TOES IN THE WATER AND GET A FEEL FOR HOW LARGE THE INDUSTRY HAS BECOME. THE BUSINESS OF SPORT IS EVER CHANGING AND CONTINUES TO LOOK FOR STRONG FUTURE LEADERSHIP. TODAY, STUDENTS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED WITH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT EXPOSE THEM TO SPORT AS A BUSINESS, ULTIMATELY HELPING THEM UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A PASSIONATE FAN AND A SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL."

- JIM KAHLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER OF SPORTS ADMINISTRATION AT OHIO UNIVERSITY

## Where it all began:

The sports business industry, as we know it today, is a relatively new player in a field of multi-billion dollar industries. The genesis for sports marketing started as early as 1858, at which time the first known athletic event to charge admission took place at a baseball game. Since then, the sports industry has seen numerous milestones.

## Where are we now?

The sports industry is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the United States. Plunkett Research estimates the size of the sports business industry at nearly \$500 billion.<sup>1</sup> To put that figure into perspective, the sports business industry is currently more than twice the size of the automobile industry in the United States and larger than such industries as insurance carriers and legal services. Globally, the sports industry is estimated to be around \$1.4 trillion.

## What does the future hold?

As the industry continues to grow, new sports and new leagues are attracting interest from fans all over the world. Sports that traditionally drew international fans, like cricket and rugby, are exploding in popularity in the United States. Meanwhile U.S. sports leagues, like the NFL and NBA, are enjoying unprecedented levels of popularity on a global scale. The emergence of social media and advances in technology now provide any sport or any league with a wide variety of platforms for reaching fans anywhere in the world. The World Surf League broadcasts its events to thousands of fans via Facebook Live while X Games fans can tune in to see their favorite events live through a virtual reality headset.

Despite an increasingly cluttered marketplace, the industry continues to thrive. Americans collectively spend 31 billion hours watching sports on TV each year—a 40% increase from a decade ago – and that figure doesn't include streaming consumption.<sup>2</sup> Sports fans have a seemingly insatiable appetite for consuming sport. That trend does not appear to be slowing anytime soon, which means the door is always open for a new sports property to grab their attention.

## SPORTS INDUSTRY MILESTONES:

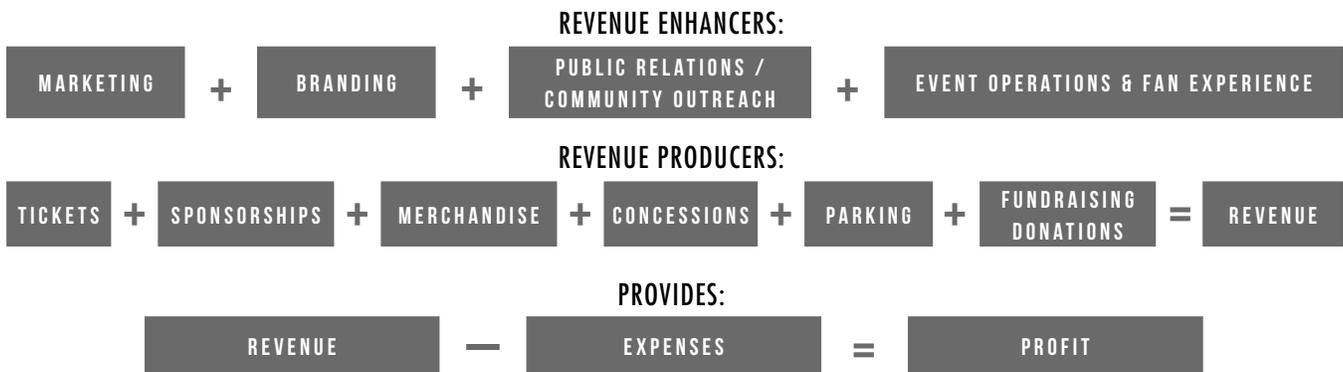
- 1921 – First baseball game on radio (Philadelphia Phillies at Pittsburgh Pirates)
- 1935 – First full season broadcast (Chicago Cubs)
- 1946 – First major sports event on television (Joe Louis boxing match)
- 1954 – First sports exclusive magazine hits the stands, Sports Illustrated is introduced
- 1961 - ABC debuts its groundbreaking Wide World of Sports program
- 1970 – Monday Night Football kicks off
- 1973 – Tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs (billed as the "Battle of the Sexes") watched by 48 million in the US and 90 million worldwide
- 1979 - ESPN launches, providing fans with 24/7 sports programming
- 1995 – DirecTV and the NFL join forces to offer the NFL Sunday Ticket, a subscriber based cable program enabling customers to watch any games of their choice
- 1999 – Major League Baseball broadcasts World Series on the Internet
- 2012 – NBC provides unprecedented LIVE coverage of EVERY Olympic event by streaming content online in addition to its traditional television coverage
- 2017 - Boxing star Floyd Mayweather and UFC champion Conor McGregor agree to fight, prompting industry analysts to predict a \$1 billion event

# HOW THE SPORTS BUSINESS PROGRAM WORKS

“SPORTS CAREER CONSULTING HAS DONE A TREMENDOUS JOB CREATING A PROGRAM THAT ENABLES SCHOOLS TO RUN THEIR ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS IN MUCH THE SAME WAY WE RUN OUR BUSINESS OPERATIONS, BUT IN A SIMPLIFIED FORMAT. THE PROGRAM IS EASILY ADAPTED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ANY HIGH SCHOOL.”

- RYAN EKLUND, ASSISTANT AD OF FAN ENGAGEMENT, BAYLOR UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

## THE SPORTS BUSINESS MODEL



The Sports Business Program is designed to emulate the same business strategies that drive professional sports teams, university athletic departments and event management companies worldwide. SCC worked with many industry executives to shape a program that could successfully be integrated in a high school setting, using the same basic business principles practiced throughout the sports industry. We call this basic set of principles **the sports business model**. As you begin to develop the sports business model for your program, be sure to utilize the supplemental resources on the CD-ROM provided with your Sports Business Program membership. Use the tip sheets to help get you started and guide you throughout the process. The marketing samples and templates will help you create the collateral materials necessary for promoting and publicizing your program.

To understand how to operate your athletic department and events like the pros (as a business), we will examine what typically determines the level of profitability for a sports organization. Aside from the standard The Sports Business Program is designed to emulate the same business strategies that drive professional sports teams, university athletic departments and event management companies worldwide. SCC worked with many industry executives to shape a program that could successfully be integrated in a high school setting, using the same basic business principles practiced throughout the sports industry. We call this basic set of principles the sports business model. As you begin to develop the sports business model for your program, be sure to utilize the supplemental resources on the CD-ROM provided with your Sports Business Program membership. Use the tip sheets to help get you started and guide you throughout the process. The marketing samples and templates will help you create the collateral materials necessary for promoting and publicizing your program.

To understand how to operate your athletic department and events like the pros (as a business), we will examine what typically determines the level of profitability for a sports organization. Aside from the standard costs such as player salaries, front office staff salaries and facility or venue rentals that factor heavily in an organization's financial prosperity, organizations also invest in marketing to boost sales of many of their products (tickets, sponsorships, merchandise, concessions and parking). In addition to marketing, teams and universities create effective branding and communications strategies to assist in generating revenue.

Often times, organizations find it extremely challenging to achieve profitability due to high costs, particularly in the area of player salaries. Fortunately, player salaries will not factor into the SBP's sports business model. This guide will focus on revenue and the ways your students can generate cash flow for the school while gaining valuable industry experience.

Historically, ticket sales and sponsorships provided the financial backbone for an organization. While the landscape has been altered by the massive broadcast rights deals, your program will continue to rely on ticket sales and sponsorships as key revenue drivers.

# HOW THE SPORTS BUSINESS PROGRAM WORKS

In addition to ticket sales and sponsorships, an organization can also generate revenue through merchandise sales, concessions, parking and fundraising efforts. Your SBP will also focus on generating revenue through the same channels. We will refer to these channels as your revenue producing groups. Use your revenue enhancing operations to support and drive those revenue producing areas. Marketing, branding, public relations (communications) and event operations will engage in activities that support your revenue producing groups.

## Your Revenue Enhancing groups include:

1. Marketing
2. Public Relations / Community Outreach
3. Event Operations / Fan Experience
4. Branding

## Your Revenue Producing groups include:

1. Sponsorship Sales
2. Ticket Sales
3. Merchandise
4. Concessions & Parking
5. Fundraising & Donations

As you navigate this process, be sure to emphasize that the business orientation of the SBP will provide them with exposure to a variety of career paths in sports and entertainment (largely dependent upon how you structure your SBP), including:

- Client Services / Customer Service
- Public Relations
- Community Relations
- Broadcasting / Journalism
- Marketing
- Event Operations / Entertainment
- Creative Services
- Finance and Accounting
- Merchandising
- Facility Operations and Management
- Ticket Sales and Services
- Premium Seating Sales and Services
- Sponsorship Sales
- Digital and Social Media Marketing
- Communications and Media Relations

The SBP will help you to successfully create the infrastructure for your school athletics, entertainment and events to generate revenue while creating a fun learning experience for your students with these **Six Simple Steps**.

## SIX SIMPLE STEPS:

1. Identify school assets (brand analysis)
2. Assess student skills and assign group responsibilities
3. Teach students using activities and modules
4. Apply Sports Business Model to your classroom
5. Develop school goals
6. Game time! Put plan into action...

It is a good idea for you to review and familiarize yourself with each step before working with your students. You must become an expert yourself before creating goals and expectations for your student “staff.” As you begin to work through the activities provided online, you will develop a greater understanding of the sports business model, as will your students.

A critical step in understanding how the program works is determining your assets and inventory. Your assets include volunteer staff, boosters, open seats, enthusiastic administrators, teachers excited about sports, excited students, cheerlead-

ers, pep bands, etc. You must also recognize the assets you have at your disposal that have a perceived value to sponsors and ticket buyers. For instance, will the administration allow you to put decals on the high school floor? Can you post banners or other signage near the playing field or stadium? Are your bleachers permanent? Do you have the ability to offer VIP parking or special seats to your season ticket holders? You thoroughly survey the landscape when identifying and determining your saleable assets.

**IMPORTANT:** We strongly urge you to spend some time with your high school Athletic Director reviewing this process together. We would also suggest contacting your state high school athletic administration to insure your program adheres to all the guidelines, rules and regulations set forth by the state’s athletic governing body.

# STEP ONE

## IDENTIFY SCHOOL ASSETS

“HIGH SCHOOLS HAVE THE LUXURY OF HAVING A BUILT-IN FAN BASE CONSISTING OF STUDENTS, ALUMNI, PARENTS AND FAMILIES. THROUGH THE CREATIVE USE OF YOUR RESOURCES, STRIVE TO GET EACH OF THEM OUT TO AN EVENT. ONCE THEY ARE THERE IT IS YOUR JOB AS A SPORTS MARKETER TO PROVIDE VALUE FOR THEIR PURCHASE AND WIN THEM BACK TIME AND TIME AGAIN.”

- RYAN TANKE, SVP AND CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER, MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES AND LYNX

Before immersing your class in the teaching modules provided in step three, you must first identify what it is that you'll be promoting. And before you know what you are promoting, you must understand your brand. We will dive deeper into the concept of branding as we progress through the SBP, but you must recognize first and foremost that your school is a brand. Your athletics program is also brand. Even your sports marketing class is a brand. And those brands carry real value. So what is your program's brand? Begin by asking the following questions:

- Are your fans, community members and local businesses aware of your brand?
- How do your fans, community members and local businesses perceive the brand?
- How do you want them to perceive the brand?

Once you have answered those questions, you will have some direction in terms of building a branding game plan. Branding is essentially storytelling. You and your students will be telling your program's story consistently throughout the process of building, maintaining and growing your SBP.

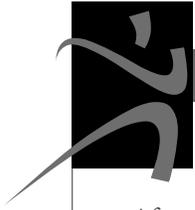
After you have a basic understanding of your brand (again recognizing that your brand has value), it is important to determine the product. What is it that your program will be promoting? Are you marketing your school sports? Will you come up with your own event? Do you have the capacity to engage in both activities?

Once you have identified your product(s), you will need to determine which groups (marketing, public relations/community outreach, event operations/fan experience, branding, sponsorship sales, ticket sales, merchandise, concessions/parking, fundraising) to create. If you have enough students and staff volunteers, you will want to implement each group to maximize the education experience. It is also suggested that you work with your school administration to determine which and how many of the groups can be implemented and on what timeline.

If your immediate plans only include a few groups, focus on marketing, branding, public relations/community outreach, sponsorship and ticket sales. These will offer the best educational experience for the students and outstanding preparation for anyone interested in pursuing a career in sports or entertainment. In addition, these are the groups that will assist in generating the most revenue for your school. Once you determine those groups to put into place in your first year, review each respective teaching module before assigning them to your students.

Use the following guide to determine which groups are right for your school:

CLASS SIZE	RECOMMENDED GROUPS
5-10 Students	Marketing / Sponsorship Sales / Publicity
10-15 Students	Marketing / Sponsorship Sales / Publicity / Ticket Sales / Branding
15-20 Students	Marketing / Sponsorship Sales / Publicity / Ticket Sales / Branding / Event Operations
20-25 Students	Marketing / Sponsorship Sales / Publicity / Ticket Sales / Branding / Event Operations
25+ Students	Marketing / Sponsorship Sales / Publicity / Ticket Sales / Branding / Event Operations / Merchandise / Concessions / Parking



# STEP ONE

## IDENTIFY SCHOOL ASSETS

*(Continued)*

After you have established a manageable infrastructure for your Sports Business Program, you will need to focus on the identification of assets. This entails an evaluation of what your program can offer stakeholders (any individual or organization whose attitudes and actions can influence the success of your program) of value. Begin this process with activities like assessing the number of seats in your facilities, identifying sponsorship inventory, creating lists of community groups that might be interested in attending your events, parking areas that could become “VIP” areas, or even thinking about relationships with other teachers that might be willing to support the SBP at your school. Try to list anything and everything imaginable that might help your program to thrive.

**The following could also be considered as assets as you work through this process:**

- Involved and supportive Athletic Directors and coaches
- Student leadership groups like DECA, FBLA, BPA
- Business classes, marketing classes, web or graphic design classes, English and Art classes
- Hall space or other areas in the school to potentially advertise your events
- Student newspapers
- Community leaders
- Booster or Alumni clubs

Engage your students by asking them to brainstorm as many possible supporters of the program as possible and by identifying any other potential assets for your “team”. Access the “asset identification” activity number from your CD-ROM to help get the ball rolling.

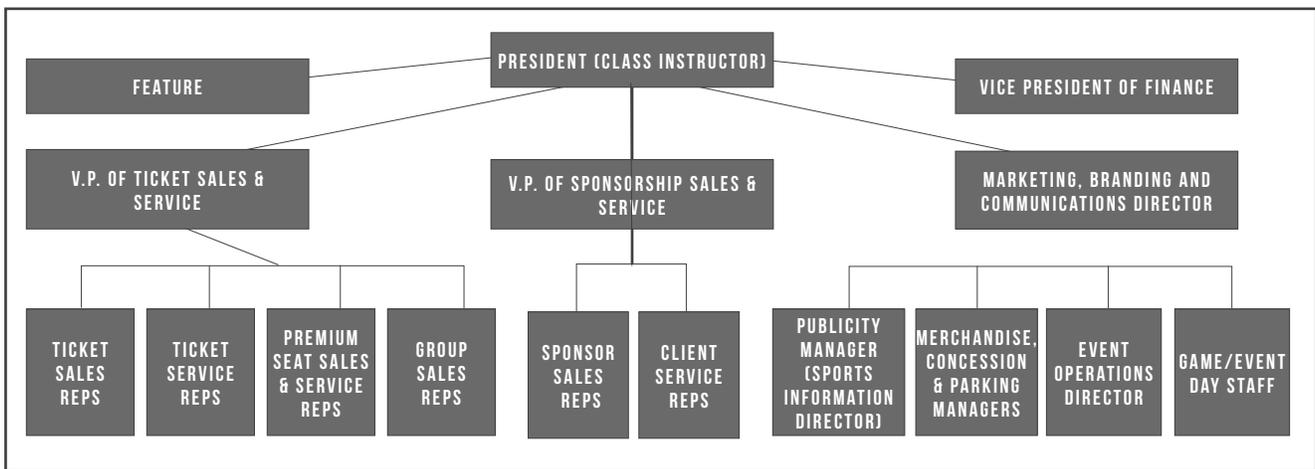
# STEP TWO

## ASSESS STUDENT SKILLS & ASSIGN ROLES

“TO ACHIEVE OPTIMUM SUCCESS, EVERYONE WITHIN YOUR SPORTS BUSINESS PROGRAM MUST CLEARLY UNDERSTAND AND CARRY OUT THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT EACH INDIVIDUAL RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PART OF THE TEAM AND THAT THEY ARE IN A ROLE THAT SUITS THEM. PUT YOUR STUDENTS (STAFF) IN A POSITION TO SUCCEED BY IDENTIFYING ROLES THAT MATCH THEIR PARTICULAR SKILL SETS.”

- JOE BRANCH, FORMER SENIOR MANAGER, GLOBAL MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS, NBA

Step two is designed to assist students in identifying their skills and interests while discovering the skills required for each of the groups involved in the Sports Business Program. Assign your students to a group after determining a match between student skills and skills recommended for each group. Use the activities from your CD-ROM to assist you with individual skills assessment and assigning appropriate student roles.



The following sample organization chart will serve as a guide to help create “departments” in which you will assign your groups and create the basic infrastructure for your program. This step in the process can also provide an excellent platform for introducing the concepts of professional development, teamwork and leadership to students.

You may want to consider turning this process into a classroom exercise. After your students have completed their personal evaluations, discuss them as a class. Once you have listed the skills associated with each position within your sports business program, have your students identify which job functions match which students.

Be elaborate and creative with this process. As an alternative to the class activity suggested above, consider simulating the complete “hiring” process to fill the positions, giving students a valuable opportunity to experience the employment process in a professional setting. If you choose to go this route and want to recreate the experience as realistically as possible, reference the “Assign Student Groups and Responsibilities” activities and job descriptions on your CD-ROM. Encourage students to create resumes and write cover letters to accompany their job applications. This can be a fantastic career prep exercise.

Once you determine which groups you can effectively put into place in the first year, review each respective teaching module before assigning them to your students. Take note of the areas of the business in focus with the sample organizational chart. For your Sports Business Program to prosper financially, develop a strong sales staff. The sample chart also illustrates an opportunity to incorporate collaborative learning by including a Vice President of Finance position. Talk with students in an accounting or finance class to see if they might be interested in assisting in the financial management aspects of your new sports, events and entertainment company. Once you determine which groups you can effectively put into place in the first year, review each respective teaching module before assigning them to your students. Take note of the areas of the business in focus with the sample organizational chart. For your Sports Business Program to prosper financially, develop a strong sales staff. The sample chart also illustrates an opportunity to incorporate collaborative learning by including a Vice President of Finance position. Talk with students in an accounting or finance class to see if they might be interested in assisting in the financial management aspects of your new sports, events and entertainment company.



## STEP THREE

# TEACH STUDENTS USING ACTIVITIES & MODULES

“THE TEACHING MODULES USED IN THE SPORTS BUSINESS PROGRAM ARE BASICALLY A SIMPLIFIED SUMMARY OF WHAT WE DO IN THE SPORTS BUSINESS WORLD ON A DAILY BASIS, BUT STRUCTURED IN A WAY THAT MAKES IT EASY TO LEARN THE GENERAL CONCEPTS QUICKLY AND EASILY.”

- TRICIA STRAUCH, FIELD MARKETING MANAGER AT ADIDAS

Step three offers teaching modules that will require students to think creatively while developing an understanding of how to achieve success in the program. The teaching modules were created to aid each of your groups in the learning process. Each module includes several classroom activities developed specifically to provide direction for students involved in each respective SBP group. The activities can be found on the CD-ROM that accompanied this book.

Many opportunities for collaboration exist between your student groups. For example, as they work through the modules, students involved with the branding group should be working with students focused on marketing and sponsorship. Your ticket sales group should be working with the PR group to share ideas and develop strategies. It would be a good idea to have at least one "all staff meeting" per week to make sure the entire class is working together. Communication is the key to a seamless transition from the conception (ideas) phase of the project to implementation.

Once you have determined which groups (departments) you will be implementing in your school (steps one and two), you will be able to easily develop them with your students by using the teaching modules and activities provided. The modules correspond with each of the Sports Business Program groups identified earlier in this guide. The modules to choose from include:

- Marketing
- Sponsorship
- Ticket Sales
- Public Relations / Community Outreach
- Event Operations / Fan Experience
- Merchandise
- Concessions / Parking
- Branding

**IMPORTANT:** Prosperous organizations assert that the foundation of their success is effective communication. Your program is no different. An open line of communication with your administration and Athletic Director regarding your program plans and strategies (along with the possible necessity of prior approval) is essential to your program's success. In fact, consider taking a proactive approach to your new business by sharing your vision and program goals with other teachers, boosters, coaches and anyone else at school who could help you through the process.



SBP  
TEACHING  
MODULES



## MARKETING

(REVENUE ENHANCING)

"START BY CREATING A SOUND MARKETING PLAN - A WELL THOUGHT OUT, WRITTEN PLAN THAT IS BASED ON STANDARD MARKETING PRINCIPLES. YOUR PLAN MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE THE UNIQUENESS OF YOUR PRODUCT(S) AND MARKET CHARACTERISTICS. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU ADHERE TO YOUR PLAN WHEN ANY QUESTIONS (OR CRISES) ARISE."

- BRIAN SANDY, PRESIDENT, TUCSON ROADRUNNERS

### Module Goal:

Create an effective marketing plan for your Sports Business Program to promote school athletics and entertainment events that will help generate revenue.

### Marketing Overview:

The business of sports and entertainment is unique in many ways. Sports and entertainment products often share the same characteristics of services in that they are perishable. Your marketing team, regardless of how talented they are, cannot sell tickets to last year's homecoming football game or last night's school play. This places a premium on inventory and maximizing sales based on those limitations. The marketing group is responsible for coming up with innovative ways to capture the attention of fans in an emotionally charged environment while giving them reasons to come back for the next game or event. Your marketers must create value for sponsors, encourage event attendees to eat more hot dogs and give your fan base a reason to don school apparel.

A sports, entertainment or event marketer's primary role in the sports business model is to effectively determine a marketing mix that will help generate an exciting buzz surrounding the teams and events they are promoting. If performed properly, marketing will not only help fill the stands, it will also help to build and grow a brand that attracts sponsors who are willing to invest in your program. This group will have ample opportunity to apply the marketing concepts learned in the classroom to the sports business model.

How important is this step in the process of developing your school's Sports Business Program? Brian Sandy, President of the Tucson Roadrunners hockey club offers this: "If the commonly held belief is true and it indeed 'all starts with a sale'? then who created the effective sales materials that generated this transaction? In actuality, at all levels of sport, it really begins with a sound marketing plan-- a well thought out, written down plan that is based on standard marketing principles, that takes advantage of your unique product(s) and market characteristics and that is adhered to when any questions (or crises) arise. If followed, this road map will serve as the catalyst for increased sponsorship and ticket sales and, ultimately, a fan experience that leaves them wanting more."

What does this mean for your program? Essentially the creation of the various dynamics and components of your plan will ultimately create the road map that guides you, your students, volunteers, administration, athletics staff and anyone else involved in the promotion of your school sports, entertainment and events throughout the school year. That is not to say that you won't deviate from your plan at some point, but this provides the foundation for how you'll implement most of your business and marketing strategies.

So, what exactly is a marketing plan? In the case of your Sports Business Program, the marketing plan will be written documentation that describes every activity your group will engage in to achieve your program's marketing goals and objectives. Because you are in the preliminary stages of building the program at your school, you will want to include short-term goals (for this school year) as well as forecasted goals in the longer term (consider a five-year plan). Focus on the development your brand as you create your marketing plan; packaging your school sports, entertainment as events as your very own sports or entertainment property. Remember, an effective marketing strategy is the foundation any successful marketing plan. Nobody can tell you how to write it because nobody knows the strengths and weaknesses of your students and class like you do. No outside marketer can tell you what will work and what won't work in your community. Like any marketing strategy, you'll have to try several strategies before you can identify which marketing efforts are successful and which might not carry much merit as you continue to build your program. This is why the development of a thorough situation (SWOT) analysis is such a critical step in the process.

## MARKETING GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES:

### DEVELOP MARKETING PLAN

The NCAA's online guide to creating a marketing plan suggests "the basic element of any successful marketing campaign is to convince the public that the product being promoted is a commodity that they either want or need." <sup>3</sup>

The guide identifies several basic objectives for a marketing plan:

- Educate the public about your school's athletic teams and school entertainment/events
- Create awareness in your school about athletic teams and entertainment/events
- Promote school sports and entertainment/events as valuable commodities to be sought by consumers

The NCAA guide also suggests that marketing plans should incorporate the following elements:

- Situation analysis (identify your program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)
- Competitive analysis (identify your program's competition)
- Goals (you will address this again in step five)
- Time line (determine a time line for creating and executing all activities in your marketing plan)

A solid marketing plan is the key ingredient to the success of any business. The Sports Business Program is no different. The role the sports marketing group plays in this process is to direct communication between groups to ensure everyone works together to help reach group goals, increase event attendance, sponsorships and provide a means to reach those goals. Consider including the following components for your marketing plan:

- Mission statement
- SWOT analysis (identify your program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)
- Marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion)
- Marketing strategy (identify target markets, positioning and differentiation strategies, etc.)
- Differentiation strategy / competitive advantage
- Market segmentation (demographic, geographic, product usage, etc.)
- Market research
- Determination of promotional channels (lockers, hallway banners, school announcements, etc.)
- Advertising (include working with vendors for quotes on any paid advertisement)
- Creation and distribution promotional materials
- Brand messaging (slogan, tag lines)
- Cross-promotional planning
- Licensing strategy
- Community outreach plan
- Digital and social media marketing efforts

### **Here are several other tips to help you successfully build your marketing plan:**

- Reference the marketing plan development activities and/or marketing plan template from your CD-ROM as a guide
- Work with your PR group to come up with strategies for generating buzz and excitement about your program as a whole at school and in the community
- For example, could you come up with a creative new concessions item to offer during basketball season that would get fans talking?
- Consider how your school mascot can be used to assist your program's efforts (if you don't have a mascot, maybe this is the time to think about bringing one to life!)
- Brand building: All your marketing should be consistent with your brand
- Logo: would developing a "secondary" logo to compliment your school's existing logo help raise awareness for your program and/or create a new revenue stream for your merchandise group?
- Remember, even the world's greatest products don't sell themselves!

## CREATE AND PROMOTE WEB SITE

Set your school apart by developing a website dedicated to your school's sports and sports marketing programs. Your program-branded website will provide an excellent way to promote upcoming events, merchandise and ticket sales. Your digital and social marketing campaigns will serve as an extension of your new website.

Consider content for your site focused on upcoming promotions, game/event times, outlets for ticket purchases, game/event highlights, player profiles and exposure for your sponsors. As a group, you must determine how you will drive traffic to the site and maximize the number of hits your page receives. Most free web builder applications (like Wix, WordPress, Weebly etc.) do most of the heavy lifting for you so you don't need to be a programmer or coding expert to analyze website data. You may also want to consider the development of your program website as another collaborative learning opportunity by involving your school's computer or graphic design classes. **Content marketing** is an incredibly effective marketing tool so think about all the content you can share with fans, as well as the distribution channels available to you for that content. For example, you might want to feature a blog or create a unique microsite to dedicated to a specific, upcoming promotion. Work with the PR group to make sure they are providing new content regularly, allowing you to refresh your online and social platforms with engaging material.

## DEVELOP SALES MATERIALS AND ADDITIONAL COLLATERAL

Obviously, your marketing group will not have the same financial resources as professional sports teams or major colleges and universities to develop flashy, expensive campaigns. However, there are still a number of ways you can effectively promote your program to help fill the stands and boost sponsorships. One particularly important role your group will play is the development of sales (collateral) materials such as flyers and brochures to help promote your events. Collateral could also be featured in your digital marketing campaign. Remember to keep the message in "on-brand" and consider doubling down on your promotional efforts by sharing through social media. The creation of sales material, signs and flyers will play a very important role in generating interest and excitement for your sporting events. This can serve as another collaborative learning opportunity by involving an art class in the creation of your promotional materials.

When developing your collateral, try to determine areas where you have a competitive advantage in your market. If you are the only local high school program, accentuate those ties to the community in your marketing efforts. In a marketplace cluttered with a growing number of entertainment options, your group must come up with ways to distinguish your product. How will you differentiate your school sports, entertainment and events from other entertainment properties who are also in competition for discretionary dollars in your local area? For example, why should consumers come to your event instead of going to the rodeo, movies or the water park?

In the end, it is up to your sports marketing group to use their creativity to build promotional pieces that will generate that excitement. Collateral, when properly positioned, can be a powerful tool that encourages your community to support your program and all that you are working to accomplish.

## MANAGE SPORTS BUSINESS PROGRAM BUDGET

Because the marketing group oversees the communications between all other groups, you should also be responsible for handling the budget for your Sports Business Program. Money generated from the program could be funneled back to the school to benefit a number of programs, possibly based on the discretion of your school administration. It is important that you clarify and negotiate with administration at the earliest stages to ensure that your sports business program and athletic department will receive a percentage of proceeds generated by your group. An accounting or finance class may prove to be a tremendous asset to your program when calculating budget numbers and managing program finances. As an alternative, you may want to consider assigning these responsibilities to the company President (teacher).

One of the most important responsibilities of sports business professionals is to determine the appropriate redistribution or allocation of the financial resources for the improvement of the organization. You will want to consider many factors when working on your budget.

Will your marketing group want to advertise in local newspapers or on the radio? Will your event operations or ticket sales groups want to bring in outside entertainment acts as a promotion to sell more tickets and add entertainment value to an event? Will your sponsorship group want to host a catered "customer appreciation" event for clients? Will your merchandise group want to upgrade their inventory by including several new items? Does your group want to consider any stadium or

field upgrades that could potentially lead to more sales? Does your ticket sales group want to add additional benefits for premium seat holders? Re-investing in your program will help foster growth, build credibility, and strengthen relationships with your stakeholders.

**ADVERTISING**

In the future, your ability to expand your program's marketing efforts will be predicated on past financial success. As your program grows and you build a significant sponsor base and increase sales of tickets, concessions and merchandise, your marketing plan will inevitably evolve, at least to some degree. With an infusion of cash for your program comes the flexibility and ability to become more creative with your promotional planning.

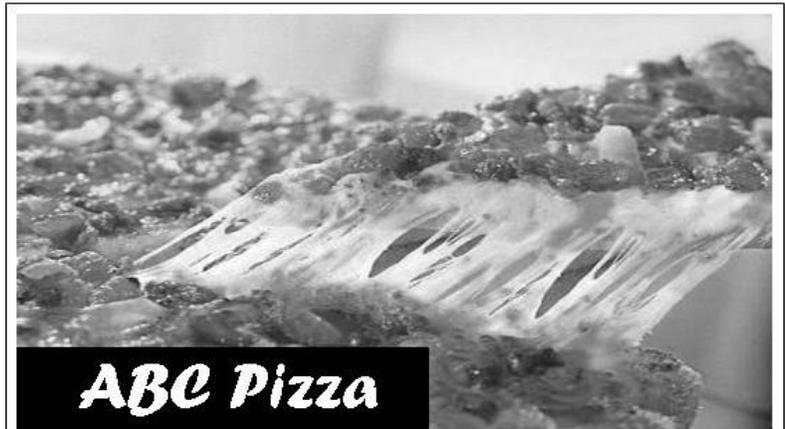
When creating your long-term marketing plan, be sure to allocate some portion of your budget for advertising. Again, even the best products don't sell themselves. Consider any/all of the following mediums to help promote your program:

- Print (newspaper etc.)
- Television
- Radio
- Online (digital and social)
- Outdoor (billboards etc.)

If you feel advertising now will have an instant impact on your ability to promote your school sports, entertainment and events and you don't have any immediate budget available, you have a few options worth considering. The alternatives would likely fall under the realm of responsibilities for your sponsorship group, but the marketing group can lend a hand in facilitating the process.

In the short-term, consider approaching your sponsors with co-op advertising opportunities. If they are supporting your program, they might be willing to invest in spreading the word through a small advertising campaign. In other words, the sponsor would "tag" existing advertisements to include mentions of whatever it is you have chosen to promote at your school. For example, if the local pizza joint (we'll call them ABC Pizza) agrees to sponsor your program, you may want to consider negotiating additional advertising opportunities as part of your agreement. So, when ABC pizza runs ads in the local newspaper, the advertisement might include a mention of your event.

Another alternative you may pursue is a "trade-out" or "in-kind" sponsorship. Essentially, instead of cash, a sponsor would provide advertising for the opportunity to be associated with your school sports or event. As an example, the local radio station might be willing to sponsor your event but instead of supporting your program with a \$2,000 sponsorship, they would provide \$2,000 worth of airtime to help promote your program.



**ABC Pizza**  
 100 South Street  
*The Local's Choice!*

**555-5555**  
**Dine in, carry out or delivery!**

ABC Pizza proudly supports XYZ High School athletics. Bring in this newspaper coupon for great deals before and after the homecoming game and don't forget kick off is at 7:00 PM!

**The official pizza for XYZ High School fans!**

Buy 1 slice at regular price, get your next slice for free!	Free regular soda with any slice of pizza (post-game only)	Large three topping pizza for just \$11.99!
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## SPONSORSHIP

(REVENUE PRODUCING)

“CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS (SPONSORSHIPS) PROVIDE A VERY IMPORTANT AND CONSISTENT REVENUE STREAM FOR ORGANIZATIONS, TEAMS, VENUES AND COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC PROGRAMS. AS THE SPONSORSHIP INDUSTRY GROWS AND CONTINUES TO MATURE, WE NEED TO TAKE THE TIME TO EDUCATE OUR NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS WITH REAL LIFE SITUATIONS. LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE IS THE ULTIMATE EDUCATION IN THE SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY.”

- ADRIAN STAITI, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS LAGARDÈRE SPORTS

### Module Goal:

Provide students with an understanding of the school's assets / inventory that is potentially available for them to sell.

### Sponsorship Overview:

Sponsorship is a form of marketing in which a specific company (such as a local restaurant) will attach their name or logo (or link in some other form) to an event (such as a school charity golf tournament). How fruitful is the business of sponsorship? IEG projects worldwide sports sponsorship spending will reach nearly \$63 billion billion this year.<sup>4</sup>

Most often, a business becomes a sponsor in hopes that a connection with the event will help increase sales. In other cases, a business might sponsor a local event to show their support within a community or to a specific cause. Ultimately, a sponsorship provides a mutually beneficial partnership between two parties. In the case of the Sports Business Program, your group will solicit partnerships with local businesses that want to affiliate their company with your school sports and entertainment and/or support your events.

### Prospective Sponsorship Sales Inventory:

- Game/event promotions (giveaways, entertainment, contests, etc.)
- Print advertising (posters, schedules, newsletters, game/event program ads and inserts, couponing)
- Signage
- Web advertising
- School/community television or radio broadcasts
- Special events (specific games, golf tournaments, etc.)
- Tickets and hospitality

## SPONSORSHIP GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Review inventory and develop inventory sheets (inventory sheets identify all potential inventory available for sale to prospective sponsors)
- Establish pricing and create rate card (the rate card attaches specific values to each itemized piece of inventory detailed in the inventory sheets)
- Develop promotional ideas
- Identify targeted customers and prospects
- Establish sponsorship sales strategy
- Create proposals
- Sell sponsorship packages (prospect, make sales calls, present and close)
- Fulfill sponsorship agreements
- Collaborate with PR group to explore opportunities for any cause marketing or philanthropical programs

## SPONSORSHIP INVENTORY:

### GAME/EVENT PROMOTIONS

The Sponsorship group must work closely with the event operations and marketing groups, as it involves the sale of promotions (giveaways, entertainment and contests) you would like to implement at your game or event. These groups must make sure the promotion or contest promised to a sponsor will be properly delivered.

### **Game/Event Promotion Example:**

Staging a “Dizzy Bat Race” contest during a time out in a basketball game that involves a several contestants placing their foreheads on the end of a baseball bat, spinning around in circles several times, and then racing to the other end of the court with a basketball and trying to make a shot. The first one to get the ball in the hoop is declared the winner. Your P.A. announcer should mention “tonight’s dizzy bat race is brought to you by \_\_\_\_\_” each time the promotion takes place at your game or event.

### **Sponsorship Sales “Sponsor Match” Example:**

After coming up with a promotional idea like the “Dizzy Bat Race”, find a potential sponsor who might be a good fit. In this case, a sporting goods store would make perfect sense as the sponsor of that promotion. The winner of the race might receive a \$10 gift certificate to the sponsor’s place of business.

## **PRINT**

Print advertising is a wonderful piece of inventory to work with for your sponsorship group. An ad for a business can be placed in a variety of places: game schedules or magnets, team posters, newsletters, pocket schedules, program inserts and couponing. In addition, the ad size can be customized to meet the needs and price range of the sponsor.

## **GAME/EVENT PROGRAM ADVERTISING**

All too often, game/event programs are not used to their fullest potential. The advertisements in the program that you will be selling vary in size and placement to meet the needs of your sponsors. There is much more room for creativity with your program ads. The following example and an exercise can help you get started. This is another great opportunity to get your art or computer design students involved as a collaborative learning opportunity.

### **Program Ad example:**

Partner with a lighting company to sponsor a full-page program ad featuring personal information and an interview with a player. It could be called the “Generic Lighting Company Player Spotlight.”

## **SIGNAGE**

Signage can be your most valuable piece of inventory in sponsorship sales. Signage uses areas of the playing field or arena to provide visual exposure for a business hoping to promote their products or services to your fans. No doubt you have seen advertising on signs, scoreboards and screens at professional sporting events.

## **ONLINE ADVERTISING**

Assuming your marketing group has created a branded website and your PR group is maintaining consistent updates, advertising on this space may be just what one of your sponsorship prospects is looking for.

Communicate to the prospect the various promotional methods you currently have in place to drive traffic to the site. If possible, track the number of hits the site has received as any potential business partner will want to have that information prior to making any kind of investment decision. You will want to capture as much user information as possible (name, e-mail address) with an “opt-in” feature that would allow for you to follow up with each visitor with information relating to your Sports Business Program events. Most template building programs like Wix, Weebly, WordPress etc. offer these features. Some domain host companies like GoDaddy also offer free website builders when you purchase your domain from them.

## **TICKETS & HOSPITALITY**

Creating a special “sponsors only” hospitality area at your event will add another valuable piece of inventory for your sponsorship sales team. Also, give some consideration to the possibility of packaging tickets with each sponsorship proposal. Suggest to sponsors that they give away tickets or passes to the hospitality area as a promotion.

## NAMING RIGHTS

Recognizing the sensitive nature of the sale of naming rights at high schools, you will definitely want to have a conversation with administration before exploring any opportunities. While any rights deals to major school venues like the football stadium or gymnasium should probably be left to a professional, you might be able to provide some creative naming rights opportunities for potential sponsors. Could you re-name a section of your parking lot? Could the weight room be a potential landing spot for a corporate sponsor? Is there a space in the gym that can be converted to a private VIP lounge on game days bearing the name of a local business?

*\* SALES TIP – When developing your list of potential partners, start with existing school or district vendors. Many vendors will have marketing budgets that would allow for supporting your SBP, and sponsoring your events could be a great “win-win” opportunity for you and local businesses!*

## SCC High School Barracudas Athletics Advertising Opportunities



### Game Program Rates

SIZE	B&W	COLOR
1/8 page	\$400	\$550
1/4 page	\$650	\$800
1/2 page	\$1,000	\$1,300
Full Page	\$1,500	\$2,000
Inside front cover		\$2,500
Inside back cover		\$2,500
Back cover		\$3,250

- More than 85 total games
- 10,000 programs distributed

Distributed at boy's and girl's basketball & lacrosse games, wrestling meets, girl's softball & volleyball games and boy's hockey games

### Additional Print Advertising

#### BARRACUDAS POCKET SCHEDULE

A sure way to get your message across to Sharks' fans. Over 40,000 of these glossy, four-color schedule cards are produced and distributed throughout the community each year. You can even distribute them at your place of business!

Cost: \$1,000 per panel / \$1,250 for back panel

#### BARRACUDA BUCKS

Here's your chance to reach over 3,000 Sharks fans. Ideally suited for coupon specials, Barracuda Bucks are redeemable at all high school sports home games and are included with all correspondence with fans, including game programs and game tickets.

Cost: \$200

## SPONSORSHIP SAMPLE: RATE CARDS

A rate card is, by definition, a published price list for purchasing advertising time or space.<sup>7</sup> In the sports, events and entertainment industry, a rate card typically refers to a list of prices associated with various pieces of inventory. In this example, the University of Minnesota Duluth identified signage and sponsorship opportunities for several key athletic properties.

If the goal of your Sports Business Program is to manage business opportunities for all of your school sports, you will want to take a similar approach with the development your rate card. Remember, the sports that are most popular and enjoy the greatest local following will command a higher dollar value. Be sure that is reflected in your rate card. Events with higher attendance will be more attractive to prospective sponsors so be sure to place a premium on those pieces of inventory.

Should you choose to manage fewer school sports (or individual school entertainment/events), your rate card will have a slightly different look and feel to it. In this case, be sure to highlight and focus on those opportunities that will capture a potential sponsor's attention while offering the best chance for maximizing revenue.

## ROCHESTER SKEETERS SPORT MARKETING PROPOSAL

Developed Especially For:  
GANDER MOUNTAIN

I. Tickets and Hospitality	
A. Four (4) End Zone Season Tickets @ \$220 each .....	\$880.00
B. Two (2) Coach's Club Memberships @ \$100 each ...	\$200.00
Total Tickets and Hospitality .....	\$1,080.00
II. Advertising	
A. Half Page Program Ad @ \$1,500 .....	\$1,500.00
(Featuring Give-away every game)	
B. P.A. Announcements: Two (2) P.A.'s at each of the 17 home games .....	\$1,700.00
Total Advertising .....	\$3,200.00
III. Promotion	
A. Gander Mountain Night .....	\$3,000.00
Opportunity to provide couponing Gander Mountain Half-Time Show (Waders vs. Blaze Orange 3-on-3 Basketball) .....	
Total Promotion Value .....	\$3,000.00
Total Value:	\$7,280.00
Your Discount:	\$2,280.00
<b>PACKAGE PRICE:</b>	<b>\$5,000.00</b>



### SPONSORSHIP SAMPLE: PROPOSALS

The first step in developing relationships with local businesses in your community is to spend some time discussing their business needs to determine how you and your Sports Business Program can help. When the time is right to present a proposal to your prospective sponsor, make sure you have carefully customized a package that helps meet the needs of each business. For example, if they have revealed that they don't plan to attend any school sporting events and don't have an interest in providing tickets for employees or customers, don't include tickets and hospitality in the partnership proposal. If they have indicated a desire to promote products and services to the student body, be sure to develop the proposal accordingly. For more help with the sales process, use the "sponsorship sales" activity from your CD-ROM.



## TICKET SALES

(REVENUE PRODUCING)

"TICKET SALES WILL BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF YOUR REVENUE GENERATING EFFORTS. DEVELOPING A TICKET STRATEGY THAT PROVIDES FLEXIBILITY AND VALUE FOR THE CUSTOMER IS THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM."

- CORBIN HUNT, ASSOCIATE ATHLETICS DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

### Module Goal:

Provide a general overview of the ticket sales process to prepare students for the actual implementation of a ticket sales plan in your school. Many activities have been included to help your school develop ticket packages and a ticket sales plan. These activities encourage creativity and provide an excellent opportunity for students to learn about the ticket sales process. For ticket sales ideas and samples, access the "team samples" folder on your CD-ROM and the "From the Vault: Promotions Database" feature online.

### Ticket Sales Overview:

Ticket sales play a critical role in the business of sports, events and entertainment. Now more than ever, offering flexibility with a ticket package is required to ensure sports and entertainment properties have something unique to offer all fans regardless of their interest level and schedules. Today, the competition for the entertainment dollar is as fierce as ever. It is the responsibility of the sports and entertainment marketer to determine how to capture those dollars.

### Ticket Sales Goal:

Generate revenue and increase attendance for your events through strategic ticket packaging and sales activities.

## TICKET SALES GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Determine and review inventory
- Establish pricing
- Identify targeted customers and prospects
- Develop ticket marketing plan (create ticket plans and packaging strategies)
- Work with event operations group on game day grid
- Develop sales and promotional pieces
- Sales and service (prospect, make sales calls, create proposals, present, close and fulfill)
- Print and distribute tickets to ticket buyers

## TICKET SALES INVENTORY:

### GROUP TICKETS

Group tickets are a block of tickets reserved for a specific game or event. Typically, a group will consist of ten or more individuals and discounts on tickets and / or additional benefits are offered to those members.

#### Group Tickets Example:

Groups of 10 or more students receive \$2 off ticket prices, a free program and a free soda.

### THEME NIGHT PACKAGES

Theme nights are specific ticket packages designed exclusively for a particular or select group. Theme nights and groups are almost synonymous with one another. Theme nights could be considered glorified groups accommodating a niche market. They encourage students to think outside of the high school "group" setting and on a much larger scale. The focus of a theme night is to attract large groups (such as local girl scouts) to attend a game or event through creatively marketing a ticket package designed exclusively for a particular group.

**Theme Night Promotion Example:**

Girl Scout Night – Bring your troop to a game or event and get \$3 off each ticket, free popcorn and soda, and the opportunity to set up a booth to sell cookies at the game/event.

**Youth Program Theme Example:**

Youth Soccer Night – All kid's club members or participants in local youth soccer programs are invited to participate in a free pre-game soccer clinic with the purchase of a ticket to that day's game.

**SEASON TICKETS**

Season tickets provide your fans with a ticket to every home game for a particular sport at a package price. Playoff tickets are not typically included with the package, however, teams have used the inclusion of playoff tickets as a powerful value-based incentive in the season ticket package. Season tickets often provide the back-bone revenue stream for many professional teams, colleges and universities.

**Season Ticket Example:**

Company XYZ purchases four “premium seats” as season tickets for their employees, customers, and to support the local high school team. As incentive to purchase four tickets rather than two, the school's sports marketing team includes vouchers good for a free soda at every game and a parking pass.

**“MINI PLAN” TICKET PACKAGES:**

Often potential customers will be hesitant to make a commitment to a full season ticket package because of the financial and time investment required to attend that many games. To address this, create smaller packages that are more manageable financially and require less time commitment.

**“Mini Plan” Ticket Package Example:**

The Varsity Baseball team offers a six-game package including two games per month (on average). Mini plan ticket buyers receive a free mini bobblehead of the baseball coach and a voucher good for free soda at each game.

**INDIVIDUAL AND SINGLE GAME TICKET SALES**

For those customers who decline the purchase of any type of ticket package, you'll want to encourage and promote the sale of individual games. This will still encourage fans to purchase tickets to individual events in advance to eliminate the risk of people changing their minds on the day of the game.

**Individual and Single Game Ticket Sales Example:**

Post flyers around the school promoting the crowning of the prom king and queen at halftime of a girls' softball game.

**PREMIUM SEAT TICKET PACKAGES**

One key component of the revenue model for a sports or event property is premium (also widely referred to as club, preferred or VIP) seating. Premium seats could include anything from suites, court side seats, or seats elsewhere that receive preferential or VIP treatment. Simply put, a premium seat is a seat at a game featuring additional benefits or values. Offering premium seats allows your school to charge a higher price for tickets because of the added value they bring and the limited number of seats being available.

**Premium Seat Benefits Example:**

Premium seats include seat cushions for added comfort at the game or event. (This also creates additional promotional opportunities for your sponsorship group.)

\* *TIP - Make these packages available only with a sponsorship or on a full season basis.*

## WALK UP TICKET SALES AND PROMOTIONAL TICKET SALES

The term “walk up” refers to fans who buy their tickets when they get to the game or event. Assigning special promotions for each game/event will help drive “walk up” sales. Maximize your numbers of walk-up fans by creating as many promotional opportunities as possible. To add incentive to those fans, you may want to discount tickets (be careful not to discount more than what you’ve offered your season, group and mini plan package customers), or come up with other incentives to offer. An example would be “Hawaiian Shirt Night” where any fans wearing Hawaiian shirts will receive \$1 off their ticket.

### **Walk Up and Promotional Ticket Examples:**

“Disco Night”: \$1 off a game/event ticket if you come to the event in disco gear

Food Drive Night: Work with your PR students to create promotion where fans receive \$1 off ticket prices by bringing a canned food item to the game or event

## **TICKET SALES TIPS:**

- Consider creating a "school spirit" ticket program offering student access to all sports and entertainment events throughout the school year for one package price (a sponsor may want "naming rights" to this plan!)
- Think about adding a sponsor to the back of your ticket stock or ticket stubs to provide an additional piece of inventory for your sponsorship group
- Integrate cross promotion strategies into your ticket marketing plans
- Tie a ticket sales effort in with a community relations program (\$1 from all homecoming game tickets sold benefits Special Olympics)
- Consider setting up an informational table or booth at several key school events displaying your ticket sales and sponsorship information such as brochures and other collateral material (have a member of your Sports Business Program team on hand to answer questions and take orders if possible)
- Use those mediums that will most effectively reach your target audience to communicate upcoming events and corresponding promotions (e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, MySpace)
- Host at least one "Pack the House" type promotion in an effort to sell out an athletic event that has historically suffered from poor attendance
- Access the "From the Vault...Promotions Database" for more ticket sales and promotions ideas



## PUBLIC RELATIONS / COMMUNITY OUTREACH

(REVENUE ENHANCING)

“KNOWLEDGE IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY IN ANY BUSINESS ENDEAVOR, PARTICULARLY IN THE WORLD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS. WE CANNOT TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT THINGS WILL ALWAYS SOMEHOW GET DONE. THERE NEEDS TO BE A PLAN. EVERY MEMBER OF THE PR TEAM SHOULD BE FLEXIBLE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO STEP IN AND DEAL WITH ISSUES AS THEY ARISE. THE VERY NATURE OF PR IS TO EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED, BUT THE FIRST STEP IN DEALING WITH ANY PROBLEM IS TO HAVE A CLEAR CONTINGENCY PLAN IN PLACE TO AVOID POTENTIAL PITFALLS.”

- PETE MORIS, ASSOCIATE AD - STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AT VIRGINIA TECH

### **Module Goal:**

To highlight the responsibilities required of the PR group and provide the steps necessary to implement your communications and PR strategies within your Sports Business Program.

### **Public Relations / Community Relations Overview:**

Publicity, while technically considered to be a component of marketing, is so important to any sports program that it merits special attention and typically becomes its own department. Why is publicity so important? In its simplest form, it provides the means for conveying information about your program to your fans through various media platforms. Publicity provides a tool for creating awareness about upcoming promotions, special events and anything else that might get your community excited about your program.

Many times, in a sports business setting, publicity is referred to as public relations, media relations and/or community relations. In some organizations, all three terms can reference the same set of responsibilities. However, in our sports business model, we are going to examine each aspect in detail.

### **PR / Community Relations Group Goal:**

The overall goal of the PR group is to encourage your fans to become more knowledgeable about, and ultimately more interested in, your team. The group is responsible for communicating information that motivates fans to become actively engaged with your brand.

### **FAN (PUBLIC) RELATIONS:**

In our sports business model, we will be replacing the word “public” with “fan” to create a new component to our PR group. Developing a positive relationship with your fanbase will have a profound impact on the financial success of your program. Fan relations refers to the methods your sports business group will employ to ensure fans feel appreciated and connected with the team. A great example of fan relations would be the development of a “fan loyalty” program used by many teams in professional sports. Teams recognize the need to reward fans who consistently attend games and events. We’ve provided our version of this in the Marketing Module’s “Frequent Fan” example. The first professional team to implement this concept was the San Diego Padres in 1996.<sup>5</sup> To date, the San Diego “Compadres” program has over 150,000 members.

### **MEDIA RELATIONS:**

Media relations refers to the relationship between a team or franchise and those media outlets that cover and follow the team. Media members consist of local newspapers, television and radio stations, as well as national media such as ESPN. The role of media relations in the sports business model we’re applying with your school will be minimal since your school likely does not garner a major media following. That’s not to say, however, that this is not an important component to your school’s sports business model. Having a positive relationship with local media can help provide additional coverage of your teams, influencing the probability of promotional coverage. This promotional coverage can serve as free marketing for your Sports Business Program.

## **COMMUNITY RELATIONS:**

Community relations is the component of the publicity mix that focuses on a team or organization's commitment to bettering their community. As an example, NBA players work each year reading to area youth in partnership with the SMART reading program. Other aspects of community relations include charitable events such as hosting a food drive at a game or participating in local United Way events. You may want to consider the development of some type of community relations program for your athletic teams.

*\* TIP – A sound community relations strategy will go a long way in building the groundwork for a stronger relationship with your alumni base. Alumni support can play an instrumental role in helping your program grow and can even provide a financial boost in the long-term as you engage in more aggressive fundraising efforts.*

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS / COMMUNITY RELATIONS GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **PUBLISH SPORTS/ENTERTAINMENT NEWSLETTER**

Your PR group will be working hand in hand with the marketing department to promote school events. One key area of this collaboration will focus on the development of content for your various marketing channels, like your program's newsletter. Your newsletter might include such content as player profiles, team related community events, casting calls for school plays, game/event results or a special fan of the month feature. The newsletter can be something you print or disseminated to fans through digital platforms like e-mail, on your program website or a through a team, school or SBP program branded app.

*\* TIP – If you do not currently have an app, consider developing one for your program. Apps provide a fun way to engage fans and an excellent platform for communicating with them.*

### **COVER SCHOOL EVENTS**

We've all heard the sports expression "It's a game-time decision." This applies not only to athletes, but also spectators attending sporting events. Quite often, people attending sporting events make their decision to attend shortly before the event begins. To assist in building fan enthusiasm and excitement, it is important for your PR team to effectively cover your events. Fans should be able to find information about last night's game easily. With a focus on accessibility, you'll also increase the probability that your fans will see the information in more than one place, ultimately assisting in the promotion of your program.

### **ESTABLISH A FAN CLUB OR KID'S CLUB**

Forming a fan club that is dedicated to rewarding your loyal sports fans can accomplish many things: 1) ensure a solid fan base 2) provide your Sports Business Program with ambassadors in the community 3) give you a venue for rewarding fans for attending games and encourage them to attend more 4) potential for an additional revenue source.

Consider building a special "Frequent Fan" type program to reward fans who come to many school events. For example, fans attending each game during the girls' basketball season will receive a special prize such as an autographed basketball or commemorative T-shirt.

Alumni clubs can also provide an additional outlet for your Sports Business Program to generate some added revenue.

### **DEVELOP NEWS RELEASES AND PRESS KITS**

Even in today's digital world, a traditional news release is still the most common means of generating free media coverage. It is important for your group to develop captivating news releases. If they aren't creative and informative, the media will not run them and you will have to rely on paid advertising. You'll want to address team performance, special events and promotions. You might consider delegating the responsibility of "approving" all releases and kits to your SID (Sports Information Director). SID plays a critical role in collegiate athletic departments across the country and should be an important figure in your program as well. See the organization chart on PAGE X? to see who your program's SID should report to.

Effective news releases will feature a creative, catchy title. Begin each release with the most important information and always include a contact name with a phone number. You can find a press release template in the "SBP Resources" folder on your CD-ROM.

**DATABASE DEVELOPMENT / CONTENT MARKETING**

One of the most valuable byproducts of content marketing is the opportunity to learn more about your fans. By creating and distributing information about your program that encourages fan engagement, you will be able to collect information and begin building a database. As such, it is critical to capture as much information about your fans as possible. Offer exclusive opportunities to fans who sign up for your SBP updates, making sure they first “opt-in” (or sign up) to receive exclusive information or promotional opportunities. The opportunity to send push notifications, text messages, emails or direct messages will be invaluable to your program. Remember, however, that this type of marketing activity is also known as “permission” marketing, so it’s important for your group to only send messages to those fans who have opted-in and wish to receive them.

**PROVIDE COPY FOR LOCAL AND SCHOOL MEDIA AND PUBLICATIONS**

Stories written by your group for the newsletter and website also make for great reading in your school’s paper or the local newspaper. As a teacher or advisor, you may want to consider scheduling a preliminary meeting with the local newspaper to discuss the possibility of members of your PR “staff” to have a “feature” or column in the local paper. This will provide great experience and a positive resume builder for your students.

**COORDINATE WITH LOCAL AND/OR SCHOOL TV AND RADIO**

Having district access television as part of your local cable package in your area can be a huge asset to your program. If that is the case, the first step is determining who controls the programming for the station. It will be crucial for you to establish a relationship with the station and to show all the unique ways a partnership with your Sports Business Program will be a valuable resource for them. If you are able to reach an agreement that makes sense for both parties, many new doors will open to your students in terms of opportunities. Not only will you have a vehicle for promoting your upcoming events and new sponsorship opportunities, you may be able to create new learning experiences for students with respect to sports careers by filming the games/events and encouraging students act as play by play announcers for the broadcast.

**ASSIST OTHER GROUPS IN SALES EFFORTS**

In almost any sports organization, each and every member of the staff is considered to be a salesperson. From encouraging fans to visit the program website and follow your SBP through social media to building excitement about upcoming promotions, PR students can help provide a sales boost. Your PR group should be there consistently to help support your revenue producing groups in any way possible.



## EVENT OPERATIONS / FAN EXPERIENCE

(REVENUE ENHANCING)

“THE EVENT OPERATIONS STAFF IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUTTING ALL OF THE ELEMENTS OF ENTERTAINMENT TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE GAME OR EVENT. EACH MEMBER OF THE GROUP MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE PROGRAM TO FIND SUCCESS.”

- TODD BOSMA, DIRECTOR OF GAME OPERATIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS, PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS

### Module Goal:

The event operations and fan experience teaching module will help you develop the added entertainment you'll be bringing to your school sports, entertainment and events. It will also prepare you for the execution of your entertainment as well as guiding you through the fulfillment process of your sponsorship agreements and promises to ticket holders.

### Event Operations / Fan Experience Goal:

The term “event operations” is a broad term encompassing all elements of game or event entertainment. From the pre-game entertainment and starting lineup announcement to half time, the event operations group is responsible for adding more entertainment value to the event. Maintaining a positive fan experience throughout your events will be one of the most important aspects of your SBP.

### Event Operations / Fan Experience Overview:

The event operations process starts before any of the events take place in the creative minds of our sports marketers. Generally, those individuals who work in event operations (referred to as game entertainment or game production in the world of sports business), have a procedure in place for developing their “game plan” mapped out for the entire season before the first game or event begins.

The fan experience is influenced by many factors that require attention to detail. As you begin to host more events, you will find ways to improve the game/event experience for fans in attendance, and know that it will always be a work in progress.

The role of event entertainment will play for your program is twofold: 1) Enhance the experience for the fans while keeping them involved in the event throughout the course of the entire game. 2) Event entertainment creates opportunities to generate revenue by adding additional valuable inventory to include as part of sponsorship packages. It also helps generate revenue by helping sell more tickets.

Remember, it is not a requirement to follow this plan directly. In fact, we strongly encourage you to use this material simply as a guide to get students headed in the right direction.

### Event Entertainment Options:

At a high school level, entertainment options at games and events have traditionally been pretty limited. However, the implementation of the Sports Business Program will help your school pick it up a notch. Your first step in this process is to identify the event entertainment options you've seen in the past or currently have in place at your school's athletic events. You should also gain some familiarity with advanced entertainment options used in collegiate athletics and by professional teams. This will allow you to make the best decisions possible when integrating the various forms of entertainment into your school sports, events and entertainment.

### EVENT OPERATIONS GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Identify and implement event entertainment opportunities
- Develop game day grid and game/event scripts
- Work with other groups/departments (ticket sales, sponsorship, PR etc.) on game day grid
- Prepare event day checklists and effectively manage overall game and event production
- Manage school mascot

## IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO ADD ENTERTAINMENT TO THE EVENT

The role of the event operations group is to keep fans entertained throughout the game or event. The team takes care of the action and entertainment on the field or court while the “ball is in play.” The event operations group is responsible for keeping the event fun any time there is a break in the action. Sports marketers view these breaks as opportunities. As an example, consider time outs at basketball games and between innings at baseball/softball games as opportunities. This is the point of the game when promotions take over in keeping the crowd engaged.

## DEVELOP GAME DAY GRID

Once you have identified opportunities, you must develop a game day grid. This is a tool to chart or display each game entertainment opportunity you have available at a given event. The grid should always be displayed prominently so every member of your Sports Business Program is prepared for each event. You can find a game day grid template in the “SBP Resources” folder on your CD-ROM.

Game #	Date	Anthem	Sponsor	Pre-Game	Half Time	Special Promos	Groups	Give Aways

## CREATE GAME/EVENT SCRIPTS

Another important responsibility of the event operations group includes the preparation of a script. The script is a document outlining every additional entertainment event that takes place during the game and must be completed prior to the game or event's start.

The script should be shared with every person involved in the event production process, including everyone from the student band and cheerleaders to the PA announcer. Your game operations group should have an appointed “Director of Event Operations” who is responsible for making sure everyone is on the same page. To help understand this concept, review the sample script provided in the “templates” folder on your CD-ROM.

## PREPARE EVENT DAY CHECKLISTS

The event operations group must also create an event day checklist. The checklist is a summary of how you will accomplish a smooth transition between scripted entertainment events. Preparing these checklists will keep the group organized and serve a very important role in the successful implementation of event day entertainment at your events.

The event operations department is responsible for every element of event presentation, right down to the staffing of ticket takers, making sure concessionaires are in place, and confirming that the merchandise area has been set up. It is their job to oversee the entire production and execute all promotions. The event day checklist will help your students to prepare for the event, maintain focus during the event, and effectively manage the event from start to finish (ingress to egress).

## SCHOOL MASCOT MANAGEMENT

Hopefully your school already has a mascot. If not, it would certainly be advantageous to create one. A mascot is an excellent marketing and branding resource and is certain to provide a great connection with the community. According to the San Jose Sharks website, Sharkie (team mascot) makes over 350 appearances per year at community events. Mascots are a fantastic addition to kid’s birthday parties, community and fundraising events and can help draw patrons to local businesses with appearances. Pursuing a local sponsorship for your mascot might be an avenue worth exploring to secure funding. Once a school mascot is in place, your event operations group is responsible for involving him/her in event entertainment. They, along with your PR team, will also be responsible for booking community appearances. Access the “mascot marketing” teacher tip sheet online to see suggestions for successful mascot marketing.

## FOCUS ON THE FAN EXPERIENCE

One of the primary responsibilities for this group is to provide the best fan experience possible for those attending your event(s). There are many of factors to consider when evaluating how to enhance that fan experience. For example, how long are the lines for bathrooms? Is it easy for fans to find and purchase merchandise? What kind of quality are your concessions items? Is the soda flat and popcorn stale? Is the music appropriate? Is it too loud? Is the mascot engaged with your fans? Try to put yourself in the shoes of the fan as you consider all the factors that will influence the experience your event will provide.



## MERCHANDISE

(REVENUE PRODUCING)

“EVERYONE HAS DIFFERENT OPINIONS OF WHICH PRODUCTS WILL BE HOT SELLERS. IN THE END, THE ONLY OPINIONS THAT TRULY MATTER ARE THOSE OF THE CONSUMERS (FANS). MANAGING A MERCHANDISE STORE EFFECTIVELY REQUIRES TIGHT TEAMWORK AMONG PEOPLE BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE YOUR ORGANIZATION. WHEN CUSTOMERS ARE HAPPY AND YOU TURN YOUR INVENTORY WELL, IT'S LIKE WINNING THE STANLEY CUP!”

- DAVID PERRICONE, FORMER DIRECTOR OF MERCHANDISE, NEW JERSEY DEVILS

### Module Goal:

The merchandise teaching module helps you develop or expand merchandising efforts as it pertains to your athletic programs.

### Merchandise Group Goal:

The goal for your merchandise team is to create and offer products that will appeal to the entire fanbase. It is the responsibility of the merchandise group to develop a distribution strategy that will help to maximize your program's merchandise sales.

### Merchandise Overview:

With a rapidly expanding consumer base and enormous market potential, the global licensed sports merchandise market is expected to experience considerable growth in the next few years. Transparency Market Research estimates that the market, which was valued at nearly \$28 billion in 2015, will reach nearly \$50 billion by 2024. <sup>9</sup> In other words, fans are buying merchandise, and a lot of it.

While the potential exists for merchandise sales to become a significant revenue driver for your program, expectations should be limited at first. As you begin, you likely won't have the budget to invest in much inventory. Additionally, you will need to feel out your fan base to see what types of products will be popular before producing too many branded items.

Ultimately, you'll have the most success by rallying behind the promotion of team spirit. Fans love to support “their” teams and wearing school gear is one of the most suggestive measures they can take in doing so. Consider working with your PR and marketing groups to help spread the word and build excitement about any new merchandise items. Be sure to remain focused on your brand as you work through this process.

Presentation is a key ingredient to a successful merchandising operation. Presentation of both your products and your kiosk/shop/stand should be top notch. Your merchandise area should be visually enticing with a professional appearance to attract customer attention. The last thing you want is for customers to look at your merchandise area and have the perception that your group just got there to set up. Studies indicate that people are much more likely to purchase from a visually pleasing display. Use some creativity to add sizzle to your merchandise area. Consider playing music and/or displaying a large screen to broadcast your program's sports highlights or other exciting event content relating to your brand. These activities will help draw the attention of fans, encouraging them to browse the branded merchandise you have available for sale.

*\* TIP - If carefully and tastefully used, holiday lights or rope lighting can look very sharp!*

### Inventory Overview:

Prior to placing your first order from a wholesaler, determine the type and amount of inventory needed for the season/school year.

To determine exactly how much to order, consider the number of events and the number of fans in attendance at each event. Calculate your average of fans per event using only those events that your group plans to have an established presence. As a general indicator for determining inventory, you should always calculate your numbers on a per attendance basis. It is also important to know that items are generally ordered in quantities of twelve (12).

Inventory auditing of your merchandise area is an extremely important step in the merchandising process. Count everything in (count the total number of pieces of inventory) before the event and count everything out at the event's conclusion. Always know your inventory and be familiar with the entire process. Do your research, know your customers, and you'll be on the fast track to a successful merchandise operation in your Sports Business Program.

The merchandise group presents another excellent opportunity for collaboration with other classes at your school. Consider teaming up with your school's Accounting teacher to create experiential learning avenues for more students at your school. Work with accounting students to help manage merchandise inventory.

### **THE MERCHANDISE PROCESS:**

1. Calculate your average of fans per event and total number of events
2. Determine your budget
3. Select your inventory
4. Order EVERYTHING before season starts (if your budget permits)
5. Establish prices for your products by deciding on markup percentages
6. Set up a tracking system and inventory control strategy
7. Determine sales locations (kiosk/store/stand)
8. Determine your presentation and how you plan to sell (sales and marketing strategy)
9. Decide on a staffing solution for each event (and coordinate this with the event operations group)
10. Audit your inventory

### **Tips for Merchandising:**

- Fans want to shop in a fun environment so it is imperative that your staff is having fun on the job
- Sales staff should be wearing the items they are selling
- If you have room in the budget, consider implementing the technology to accept credit cards (there are many easy to use and cost-effective options available)
- Always be sure to have enough cash on hand to make change at the event
- Consider partnering with ticket sales to package novelty items to help push product
- Traditionally, it is best to set up kiosks/shops/stands in an area near the doors (consider having several people selling merchandise where fans tend to congregate)
- Initially, it is best to limit the number of items offered so consider stocking only T-shirts, sweatshirts and two to three novelty items until your budget will allow for expanding your inventory
- Statistically, novelty items (foam fingers, pencils, etc.) sell best at events because they are inexpensive and fun...be sure to carry at least one novelty item
- Recommended sizes: Small, Medium, Large, and XL (at the very most, at least initially)
- Make P.A. announcements during your game or event encouraging fans to stop by your merchandise area
- Promote merchandise availability through all social media channels
- Consider setting up an online store on your program (or school) website
- Leverage school spirit to the max!
- Remember, promotion isn't just the responsibility of the ticket sales, marketing and sponsorship groups!



## CONCESSIONS / PARKING

(REVENUE PRODUCING)

"IN GREEN BAY, WE FOUND THAT SOME OF OUR CLIENTS WERE LOOKING FOR SPECIAL AMENITIES WHICH INCLUDE IN-SEAT FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICE, PARKING OPTIONS AND ACCESS TO THE FACILITY. CLIENTS ARE WILLING TO PAY A PREMIUM FOR THE SPECIAL FEATURES AND APPRECIATE THE PERSONALIZED ATTENTION THEY RECEIVE FROM A DEPARTMENT GEARED TOWARDS MAKING THEM FEEL THEY MADE A WISE INVESTMENT PROFESSIONALLY OR PERSONALLY."

- JENNIFER ARK, DIRECTOR OF STADIUM SERVICES, GREEN BAY PACKERS

### **Module Goal:**

The Concessions and Parking module is designed to provide an overview of how these two aspects of the sports business model can provide your program with a steady source of revenue.

### **Concessions and Parking Goal:**

To establish a framework for organizing your concessions and parking in a manner that enhances the experience for fans attending games/events and maximizes the amount of revenue generated.

## **CONCESSIONS & PARKING GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT

The impression fans have of your game or event is not formed solely while in their seats. Attendees begin taking in the experience the moment they get near your high school or event location. As a result, having a well-organized and friendly parking and concessions staff becomes a crucial ingredient to the overall success of an effective sports business plan.

### STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY:

1. Make a list of potential volunteers and organizations who pride themselves on community involvement
2. Create job descriptions
3. Develop a list of job responsibilities
4. Begin calling volunteers and organizations to make sure all events are staffed

### CONCESSIONS ORDERING AND FULFILLMENT

This aspect is geared specifically toward your school's concessions. It is very important to have a solid understanding of where your inventory levels need to be, what your replenishment points are (reordering) and what products or items you should be carrying.

### PRODUCT / VENDOR STRATEGY:

1. List concessions products you would like to carry
2. Determine who the vendors are that carry those products
3. Conduct a survey of a sampling of your customer base to determine what concession items fans enjoy
4. If available, examine invoices from years past to determine the volume of product sold
5. Form a system for determining inventory levels and replenishment points
6. Establish vendor partnerships (see details on the next page)

*\* TIP: Work with the PR and marketing groups to craft a strategy of offering unique and fun concessions items that will generate excitement about your program and events.*

## VENDOR PARTNERSHIPS

Vendor partnerships refer to the relationship between your school and a company (vendor) that will supply the wholesale product. In this step of the concessions and parking process, your concessions and parking group have a wonderful opportunity to work with your sponsorship group to pursue and explore vendor partnership possibilities. A vendor partnership provides an extremely valuable piece of sponsorship inventory. A sponsor has an incredible branding opportunity as well as a chance to sell their products at your games. To add even more value to a potential sponsorship, consider an exclusive partnership with a vendor. For example, if Pizza Hut is a sponsor, consider offering them an "exclusivity opportunity" to be the only pizza vendor at your games.

## VENDOR PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY:

- If you have not yet negotiated "pour" rights with a beverage provider, make this your first priority (Pour rights refer to the designation of one company in a specific beverage category such as soda or bottled water with the rights to sell product at your games and events)
- Determine which products you want to offer at your games and events
- Collect the names of potential vendors that provide concessions products
- Review invoices from years past to determine the volume of product sold (Use this information when proposing sponsorship opportunities to vendors)
- Work with sponsorship department to create sponsorship proposals
- Work with ticket sales and sponsorship groups in fulfillment and packaging

## VIP PARKING BENEFITS

When considering your school assets, parking should be viewed as an excellent opportunity for your Sports Business Program. Limited parking availability at schools creates demand for parking spots among fans. High demand produces a perceived value and an opportunity to add great value to ticket sales and sponsorship packages. Your concessions and parking group should determine the best way to build a parking package that offers additional appeal, while limiting the total number of parking options included in your packages. There are two reasons for this. One, you want to be sure that parking is still at a premium, hence the additional value. Two, you don't want to create ill-will with other fans and customers if those "VIP" parking spaces frequently go unused.

If offsite parking is needed, consider working with the sponsorship group to find a local business who may be willing to sponsor a shuttle service. A local restaurant may see that as a great way to drive traffic to their respective establishment before games or events and may choose to co-op with a local transportation company.

*\* TIP - As another fun promotional idea and additional venue for generating revenue, consider offering a valet parking service on specific game dates (Homecoming) or with certain ticket packages.*

## WORKING WITH TICKET SALES AND SPONSORSHIP

Your concessions and parking group has another prime opportunity to work closely with the ticket sales and sponsorship groups to build promotions. Bundling concessions and parking with ticket packages and sponsorship agreements has long been a successful industry tool.

## **Examples of Concessions and Parking Packaging Strategies:**

- One free parking pass with purchase of four or more premium, VIP or club seats
- Family meal deal night: Buy four tickets, get 4 hot dogs and 4 sodas for free
- Each sponsorship investment valued at \$3,000 or more automatically receives parking considerations



## BRANDING

(REVENUE PRODUCING)

"BRANDING IS YOUR TEAM'S IDENTITY. WHEN SOMEONE SEES YOUR BRAND, THEY SHOULD ASSOCIATE ALL THE GOOD YOUR PROGRAM STANDS FOR: FROM AFFORDABLE FAMILY FUN, TO QUALITY FOOD AND BEVERAGE, TO HIGH LEVEL ENTERTAINMENT. THE BRAND, WHEN SEEN AROUND THE COMMUNITY, IS FANTASTIC ADVERTISING AND INVALUABLE WHEN THE ASSOCIATION IS A POSITIVE ONE."

SHAWN KISON, GENERAL MANAGER, LAKESHORE CHINOOKS

### Module Goal:

Create an effective branding strategy for your Sports Business Program, giving your school sports, entertainment and events an image and identity that will encourage fan and community support.

### Branding Overview:

What first comes to mind when you hear the word Apple, Starbucks, Coca-Cola or Disney?

What about Harvard? Duke University? The Crimson Tide or Fighting Irish? New York Yankees or Manchester United?

The mere mention of these names likely invoke a certain image or feeling about the brands they represent. You may view each brand favorably or unfavorably. You may not have a strong feeling about each brand one way or another, but likely have high levels of brand awareness. Of course, these are some of the most widely recognized brands in the world, but every brand carries value, including your program's brand.

Broadly defined, branding is the practice of creating a name, symbol or design (or combination of those elements) that identifies and differentiates a product from other products. Effective branding provides products with a competitive advantage. The development of an effective branding strategy will provide a powerful resource for all your future marketing efforts.

Keith Forman, Director of Corporate Partnerships for the Portland Timbers, perfectly explains the importance of branding your program: "Your brand is your total identity. It is the summation of every decision an organization makes on staff, players, coaches, playing style, social media, community involvement, website, sponsorship relationships, ticket prices, TV broadcast quality, stadium food, merchandise designs, etc. Your customer/fan considers all of these components and makes an emotional decision on how they feel about you. This opinion directly influences the amount of time and money they choose to invest with you. Your logo is a visual reminder of every interaction your fan has ever had with the brand. Everybody working in the organization needs know their audience, understand the values of the brand, and work together to protect and develop it."

### Branding Goal:

Initially, the goal of your branding group is to create brand identity and awareness. Your brand is the foundation for your Sports Business Program, and an established brand will provide the roadmap for all future marketing activities. Establishing, maintaining and growing your brand will be one of the most critical elements in building the foundation for a successful program.

### BRAND BUILDING:

Building a brand takes time. It is a process, and it is important not to rush this step. Take your time and do it right, as mistakes can be costly and difficult to reverse.

### DEFINE / IDENTIFY YOUR BRAND:

In order to get where you need to go, you need to first recognize where you are at. Every school is unique. While it doesn't hurt to see how schools are positioning their brand and implementing strategies that have been effective elsewhere, be careful not to compare your school or your program to other schools. Nobody can provide a more accurate analysis of your current brand position than you and your students, and that will be

### BRAND BUILDING STEPS:

1. Define and identify your brand
2. Evaluate your brand position
3. Streamline your brand
4. Develop and strengthen your brand position
5. Represent your brand!

the first step in the brand building process. It is up to your branding group to identify what makes your school and your program unique, and what characteristics will provide the foundation for building a brand your community can be proud of.

As you begin to work through the branding process, it is important to recognize that your brand is a reflection of your staff and students, your school, and the surrounding community. How your students represent the brand will be paramount in building brand equity and the development of long-term community support. Be sure to communicate the importance of this accordingly, as each member of your Sports Business Program represents an extension of your brand.

### **EVALUATE YOUR BRAND POSITION:**

After defining your brand, it is necessary to evaluate your current brand position. Is the brand already well-developed? Do you have high levels of brand awareness in the community? If your brand is not already established, you have an amazing opportunity to build it from the ground up. Even if awareness levels are high, you are in a great position to help the brand grow. In either case, be sure to put your program in a position to succeed by creating branding strategies based on long-term goals. Build your brand with integrity by creating something you know your stakeholders would be proud to wear on a t-shirt.

### **STREAMLINE YOUR BRAND:**

Effective branding means managing the message in a way that provides consistent positioning of the brand in the manner for which you want it to be perceived. One of the biggest mistakes made by high school athletics programs is to introduce multiple logos for multiple sports. For example, does the volleyball uniform feature the same logo or emblem as the football helmets? If you truly want to convey a message of community, the brand positioning must be unified. Take the steps necessary to streamline your brand to help maintain brand consistency.

### **DEVELOP / STRENGTHEN YOUR BRAND POSITION:**

Only after gaining a firm understanding of your current brand position will you be able to take action to strengthen the brand. If you are not comfortable with your current brand position, an overhaul might be necessary to build the foundation for your program by engaging in a re-branding effort. Re-branding often includes the development of a new logo or the alteration of an existing logo. The introduction of a secondary mark might be worth your consideration.

In the long-term, strengthening the brand will increase the likelihood that students will want to stay involved with your school after graduation. Creating strong relationships with alumni can be an incredibly powerful tool for your program. Alumni support can be the difference between a mediocre program and a great program.

The key to any effective branding strategy is to focus on communicating your message in a way that evokes emotion. Emotion is one of the most your program's most valuable assets. It provides a bond between your brand and your stakeholders.

As you develop a plan for strengthening your brand, approach it from a storyteller's perspective. Your brand is your story. It is your narrative and should reflect your program's personality. It must be authentic and organic. Every aspect of your marketing should tell your brand story. Good storytelling will keep your community interested and engaged with your brand year after year.

### **REPRESENT YOUR BRAND:**

With all the effort required to build a strong brand, you and your students should be proud to represent the brand. Represent the brand often, and represent it well. Representing your brand goes beyond wearing a logo on a baseball cap or a sweatshirt. Each member of your program is an extension of the brand. Students have a responsibility to engage in the type of behavior that is consistent with your brand, not only at the events you host but in the classroom and in the community.

*\* TIP - Any attempts to over-commercialize your brand will most certainly create resentment amongst your fan base. Tread very carefully when considering how to monetize your branding efforts!*

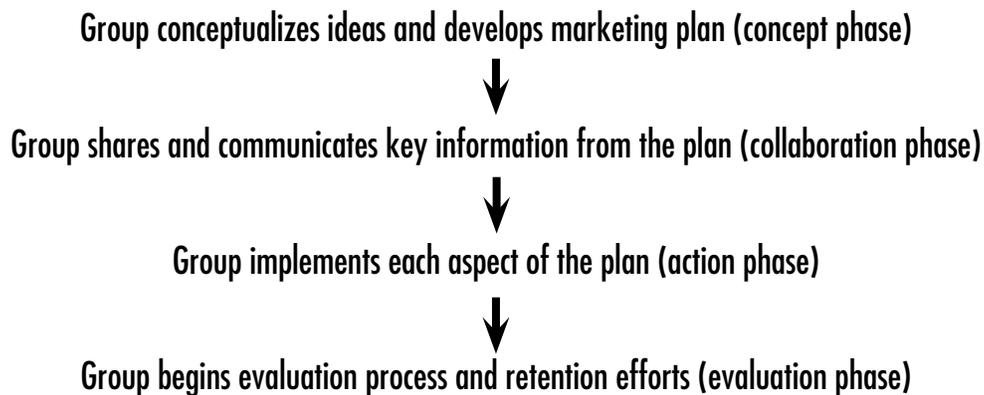
## STEP FOUR

### APPLY SPORTS BUSINESS MODEL TO CLASSROOM

"BEFORE INTEGRATING THE SPORTS BUSINESS MODEL IN YOUR SCHOOL, BE SURE YOU HAVE SUCCESSFULLY WORKED THROUGH THE TEACHING MODULES TO LEARN THE BASIC CONCEPT OF HOW SPORTS BUSINESS OPERATES. ONCE YOU'VE GOT A SOLID UNDERSTANDING OF THOSE CONCEPTS, THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS WILL BE A SNAP."

- TOM GARRITY, CEO AND PRESIDENT, SIOUX FALLS STAMPEDE & SIOUX FALLS CANARIES

Step four is the phase of the Sports Business Program where students apply the concepts learned through the use of the teaching modules and activities to school sports, entertainment and events. Review the responsibilities identified in each module that each group shares in the implementation of the program. Ideas developed through the student activities will serve as a valuable resource. Refer to those activities in this step.



For an easy way to begin implementing the SBP, consider the following flow chart to provide direction for the natural progression of tasks. Each group should follow the same general process.

This chart should provide the foundation for your implementation of all aspects of the SBP for each sport and event you promote throughout the duration of the school year. You will want to pay particular attention to the fulfillment aspect of the cycle to build positive relationships with your sponsors and ensure they get what they are paying for. For assistance developing your initial collateral (sales letters etc.), access the forms and templates section from your CD-ROM. Also, remember to encourage communication between groups as maintaining dialogue to keep everyone in the loop will be a key ingredient to accomplishing your program's goals.

Be sure to use the six simple steps to guide you throughout this process and rely on the classroom activities to keep your groups on track. To help you get started, review the "Start-Up Checklist" tip sheet in your teacher tip sheets folder.

The first step in the process requires that you share your vision for the program with administration and any other key personnel who will help establish the Sports Business Program at your school. The next step, after you have drawn up preliminary plans for your program's infrastructure, will be to determine what it is that you'll be promoting. If you will not be promoting your school sports, what will you be promoting? A school play? An event determined by your class? This is where the flexibility of the Sports Business Program becomes invaluable, offering a unique opportunity for you and your students to get creative.

# STEP FIVE

## DEVELOP PROGRAM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

(Continued)

“SET YOUR GOALS HIGH, AND DON'T STOP TIL' YOU GET THERE.”

- BO JACKSON, FORMER NFL & MLB STAR ATHLETE

Webster defines a goal as “the end toward which effort is directed.” In the sports business world, goals should be measurable. To accurately track organizational effectiveness, a goal should be a target with tangible end results and a timeline.

Traditionally, the development of goals is accomplished prior to trying to achieve those goals through the performance of strategies. However, it is important to first work through the modules and develop those strategies to help gauge appropriate achievement levels in the goal setting process.

After your group establishes goals, establish a means for tracking your progress. This will serve as a tool to benchmark student growth and improvement for future years of the program. A record serves as an invaluable asset for establishing the program's credibility, allowing you to persuade your administration to allow for expansion of the SBP program in the future.

*Use the following guide to assist in the development of goals for your school's Sports Business Program:*

SPB GROUPS	MEASURABLE GOAL
Ticket Sales	Number of seats sold, ticket revenue in \$, attendance figures
Sponsorship	Sponsorship revenue, total number of sponsor partners
Merchandise	Merchandise revenue, net profit, growth in number of items sold for the year
Concessions & Parking	Concessions / parking revenue & profit
Publicity	Number of community events involved in, attendance figured, publication (newsletter) distribution numbers and readership, number of profiles/features in local media
Marketing & Branding	Overall revenue, attendance figures, web site traffic, social media followers and engagement

One recommended method for tracking these goals is the utilization of a “Sports Marketing Scoreboard”. This is a creative and fun method to keep students on a path toward achieving your goals and easily communicates your sports business group's objectives.

In addition to carefully tracking your SBP goals, consider offering incentives when your students reach certain levels of accomplishment. For example, if they manage to sell-out your event, throw a pizza party with some of the profits. If they successfully integrate in-game promotions for five different school sporting events, take them on a field-trip to see a local college or professional team and observe how they implement in-game entertainment. You might also want to have your students suggest some ideas for incentives tied to program goals. This will help maximize “buy in” from your students and help to keep them motivated.

As advisor of the Sports Business Program, you should also keep in mind the overall goals of the program and share them with your students.

1. Offer an opportunity for students to gain valuable “hands-on” sports, event and entertainment business experience in a unique and exciting learning environment
2. Provide the ultimate entertainment atmosphere for your fans while enhancing the student athlete experience by packing the stands at school events
3. Raise funds for your educational and extracurricular programs, charities and/or school athletic department

**IMPORTANT:** *Ultimately, the Sports Business Program is a learning tool with the primary goal being education. Fortunately, the program offers a lot of flexibility in terms of grading. As the program's advisor, measuring aptitude and student progress is entirely up to you.*



## STEP SIX

### GAME TIME! PUT PLAN INTO ACTION...

"PUTTING THE PLAN INTO ACTION IS WHEN YOU ACTUALLY IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGIES YOU DEVELOPED THROUGH YOUR PREPARATION AND PLANNING. LET THE GAMES BEGIN!"

- DAN LITZINGER, OWNER, ROCHESTER HONKERS BASEBALL CLUB

**Game Time.** The lights go dim, the fog machines roll out and the announcer booms the starting lineups. Fireworks explode and music energizes the crowd. An exciting buzz hangs in the air and energy levels are high...

It is time for the spotlight to shine on you, your students, and the program you've worked so hard to develop. This is the moment where you can begin to enjoy the fruits of your labor. A successful effort will leave fans with a special experience and the desire to come back for another game. Most events rely heavily on the emotional experience. The better the fan experience, the increase in likelihood for returning fans with a resulting boost in attendance and more value for existing sponsors. Enhancing the fan experience will ultimately result in creating opportunities to maximize your Sports Business Program revenue while opening the doors to new ways your program can flourish.

## CONCLUSION

"DO NOT LET WHAT YOU CANNOT DO INTERFERE WITH WHAT YOU CAN DO."

- JOHN WOODEN, FORMER BASKETBALL HEAD COACH, UCLA BRUINS

Sports Career Consulting developed an easy model for your marketing and business students to apply sports business strategies to your school athletic department and entertainment events.

The supplemental materials that coincide with this guide are intended to help provide additional guidance as you begin to implement the SBP at your school. The program also provides an exceptional means for giving students a glimpse of potential career paths in the business of sports and entertainment. The program offers unique "work" experience, which will be invaluable for those who choose to pursue a career within the industry. Mark Gress Jr., Vice President, Recruiting at PRODIGY SPORTS, says "My advice to anyone who wants to work in sports: intern, volunteer, work part-time, take sports-related courses...the pay might not be great, the hours may be tough, and you might not get to enjoy the game, but the experience will pay off in the long term."

At the end of the day, the success of your new Sports Business Program is up to you and your students. So remember, have fun with this. Not only are your students gaining a wonderful educational experience, but this is a valuable project that can make a difference in your school and in your community. Don't lose sight of what the Sports Business Program is really about...creating an enjoyable learning environment for your class. Enjoy this experience and your students will too.

## SPORTS BUSINESS KEYWORDS

**BUDGET** — A document detailing the financial impact of each component of the marketing plan. The document allocates a pre-determined sum of money for specific business and marketing related purposes.

**BUNDLING** — The practice of packaging one or more products or services for one price in an effort to add value for the consumer.

**BRANDING** — The practice of creating a name, symbol or design (or combination of those elements) that identifies and differentiates a product from other products.

**CLOSE** — Term used in sales that indicates the end of the sales process and beginning of the fulfillment process. Usually indicates an agreement between the team and customer to an agreeable partnership.

**COLLATERAL MATERIAL** — Promotional materials such as flyers, newsletters, brochures, and posters used to reach the consumer directly rather than via mass-media platforms.

**CONTENT MARKETING** — Marketing strategy that focuses on the creation and distribution of valuable, relevant and consistent content to maximize engagement with consumers

**CO-OP** — An arrangement between two businesses that allows them to share costs in a marketing effort that will benefit both parties involved.

**COUPONING** — Process of allowing a corporate or event-day sponsor to distribute an offer to fans as they enter or leave the sports venue with the intention of encouraging fans to patronize the sponsor's place of business.

**COVER LETTER** — A document that tells an employer the type of position an individual is seeking and specifically how the applicant is qualified to fill the job opening. Also referred to as a letter of introduction or letter of application.

**DRIVE TRAFFIC** — A term used to describe the effort of a particular sponsorship to encourage fans to frequent the respective sponsors place of business.

**EGRESS** — Period of time in which fans are leaving an event.

**EXCLUSIVITY** — An agreement between your school and a company that stipulates that you will not promote products for any other like companies within a particular industry.

**FULFILLMENT** — Process of executing each of the elements promised in a sponsorship agreement.

**GROUP TICKETS** — A predetermined number of tickets (usually 10 or more) that are packaged together and promoted by offering a discounted rate or additional benefit.

**INGRESS** — Period of time in which fans are entering an event area.

**INVENTORY SHEET** — Inventory defines exactly what assets an event or property has available to sell. An inventory sheet outlines each specific piece of inventory available for sale.

**JOB DESCRIPTION** — A written statement that describe the duties, expectations and responsibilities for a specific job function within a company/organization.

**LUXURY SUITE** — A private seating section in arenas, stadiums and other entertainment venues typically featuring discernible amenities not available to other fans in attendance. Amenities may include best available sightlines, flat screen television sets, stereo systems, private catering, personal wait service and premium comfort seating. Often referred to as a sky box or luxury box.

**MISSION STATEMENT** — A written statement that captures an organization's purpose, customer orientation and business philosophy. 6

## SPORTS BUSINESS KEYWORDS

**OBJECTION** — Term used in sales to describe a concern or misunderstanding a prospect has about your product or service.

**POUR RIGHTS** — The right for a beverage company to provide your fans with their products at your games and events.

**PREMIUM ITEM** — Miscellaneous novelty items given away to fans as souvenirs. Often used as an effort to stimulate ticket sales or an opportunity for sponsors to promote their business.  
**ORGANIZATION CHART** — A diagram that illustrates a company's chain of command and helps identify the roles and responsibilities of its employees and staff.

**PREMIUM / LUXURY / CLUB SEATING** — Terms used to identify seat locations with a preferred location in the arena or an area that includes additional amenities.

**PROSPECTING** — The part of the sales process that involves researching businesses and individuals that appear to be in a position to benefit from the products / services offered by your organization.

**RATE CARD** — A published price list for purchasing advertising time or space.<sup>7</sup>

**RENEWAL / RETENTION** — Terms used in sports to describe an effort to keep fans coming back to games and events or continuing a financial relationship with the property from a sponsorship perspective. Generally used with respect to getting season ticket holders to retain their seats for the upcoming season.

**RESUME** — A document (typically one or two pages) that provides background information about a prospective employee.

**SCRIPT** — A document outlining every single additional entertainment event that takes place during a game or event.

**SEASON TICKETS** — Provide fans with a ticket to every home game, typically at a discounted rate.

**SIGNAGE** — A reference to a promotional strategy where various forms of graphics are created to display information at events, often times in conjunction with a sports or entertainment property.

**SITUATION ANALYSIS** — Provides information that is helpful in matching the organization's resources and capabilities to the competitive environment in which it operates. Commonly referred to as a SWOT analysis.

**SPONSORSHIP** — A form of marketing in which companies attach their name, brand, or logo to an event for the purpose of achieving future profits.<sup>8</sup>

**SPONSORSHIP PROPOSAL** — An offer form customized by a team to address the needs of a business. Sponsorship proposals outline what pieces of inventory a team has that they believe will help a business meet their needs and achieve their goals.

**SPORTS BUSINESS MODEL** — The prototypical business model used by professional sports organizations and university athletic departments.

**STAKEHOLDERS** — Any individual or organization whose attitudes and actions can influence the success of your program.

**THEME NIGHT** — A ticket package designed exclusively for a particular or select group (such as Girl Scout Night or Teacher Appreciation Night).

**TICKET PACKAGES / PLANS** — A sales approach that involves grouping together a select number of games to form a "package" or "plan". Teams generally offer a special rate and/or an additional benefit for committing to a greater number of games.

**TICKET STOCK** — The paper on which game tickets are printed.

**VENDOR PARTNERSHIPS** — Relationship between a company and your school where the company provides your organization with products (typically food and/or merchandise) in exchange for marketing exposure for their business.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nearly fifteen years ago, I decided to leave my dream job in the NBA to pursue another passion as an aspiring entrepreneur. Today, Sports Career Consulting provides hundreds of high schools around the country with sports business curriculum and instructional resources. We have also hosted thousands of students on field trips through our sports business events. Our Jordan Brand “Believe to Achieve” conference attracts more than 500 students every year, providing a fantastic opportunity to not only teach, but inspire, the next generation of sports business leaders. Nothing is more rewarding than hearing from former students that have been involved with our programs who have gone on to land dream jobs of their own.

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Here's to another fifteen years!

Sports Business Program: Marketing Your School Sports, Entertainment and Events

Fourth Edition

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