

*A Marketing Plan for the 2009
NCAA Women's Basketball Regional*

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Executive Summary

The concept of marketing is the means that an organization seeks to make a profit by serving the needs of customer groups. The purpose of marketing concepts is to rivet the attention of marketing managers. Successful marketing starts with the recognition of customers needs and then works backwards to devise products and services to satisfy these needs. The principal task under the marketing concepts is not to manipulate consumers to do what suits the interests of an organization, rather to find effective and efficient means of making do what suits the interest of customers.

The goal of this project is to provide an effective marketing plan for the 2009 NCAA division one women's basketball championship Raleigh Regional and to out sell more tournament books than the women's regional held in Greensboro, NC in 2008. Should the goal be accomplished, it will provide the following: an enjoyable game-day experience for the participating teams, build awareness for women's basketball locally and nationally, have a financial impact on the city of Raleigh, and provide a national platform to show off NC State for hosting the event.

Based on findings and research of prior tournaments this marketing plan's objective is to target groups that have an interest in women's sports.

Marketing is never constant; it is an on going practice. Successful marketing plans are constantly changing to appease the needs of the customers. Hopefully, this project will have a positive impact on future women's basketball tournaments held in the area.

I. Introduction

Overview

The idea of marketing, focusing on how to satisfy consumers, has been a part of business in a formal way since the 1950's. Marketing is the total sum of activities that keep a company focused on its customers and ensure that its customers value the company's offerings. The view that the customer is always the focal point is the primary principal of the marketing concept. Many organizations use the customer in their slogan. McDonald's slogan; "We Do It All for You" is a primary example. United Airlines uses "You're the boss" and "Chosen #1 in People Pleasin" is the slogan Holiday Inn expresses (Hiam & Schewe, p. 14). The American Marketing Association defines marketing as "the process of planning and executing conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals." (Peter & Donnelly, p. 3). In developing a strategic plan, an organization must gather information about the changing elements of its environment. The information gathered is useful in aiding the organization to adapt better to these changes through the process of strategic planning. The mission statement, or purpose, of an organization is the description of its reason for existence. In order for an organization to succeed, there mission must constantly improve in products and services to meet the customers' needs. (Peter & Donnelly, p. 7)

The successes of any marketing plan hinge on how well it can identify customer needs and organize its resources to satisfy them profitably. A critical element of a marketing plan is selecting target groups or segments of potential customers the organization is going to serve with its product (Peter & Donnelly, p. 20). Once the target

market is identified, the marketing mix plays a role in achieving your objectives. The marketing mix consists of five major decision areas: product, price, promotion, place, and public relations, which are explained thoroughly in the literature review portion of this project.

Sports marketers use many of the concepts of marketing, just geared specifically to sports. The term “sports marketing” was created by *Advertising Age* in 1979 to describe the activities of consumer and industrial product and service marketers who were increasingly using sports as a promotional tool (Mullen, Hardy, & Sutton, p. 11). The development of sports marketing originated from the ever-changing demographic structure of sport consumers. The needs and demographic make-up have become more complex; therefore, the demand for professional sport marketing has grown. The role of a sports marketer is to sell not only the product but also the experience.

In order to accomplish this task some unforeseen barriers were introduced. One of them is marketing myopia, or the lack of foresight in marketing ventures. There was a focus on producing and selling goods and services rather than identifying and satisfying the needs and wants of consumers and their markets. This also led to confusion between promotions and marketing. However, this fact has completely turned around in the past few decades. A critical factor for the demise of marketing myopia is 20% of the positions available in college athletic departments have been dedicated to sports marketing (Mullen et al., p. 14). Universities across the country have developed programs specifically towards increasing positions for sports marketing and for having a better understanding for its consumers.

Sport marketing is generally viewed as a tangible item; more often than not sport is an intangible product that cannot be simulated. The main components for sport marketing include: product, market, finance, and promotion. Today, the golden rule in any sports marketing department is to market the product, whether it be a team or an event. The second objective is to provide customer satisfaction through utilizing different game-day promotions and contests (Mullen et al., p.15).

One group in particular that applies sports marketing practices and benefits from them is women's athletics. Research suggests women's team sports attract a wider age range than their male counterparts. Prices in women's sports are also more affordable. An NCAA survey revealed, fans of women's basketball, regardless of gender, enjoy watching the game because in their minds it is distinctively different. Also the fans perceive the athletes to be more articulate than men and accessible. Women's sports are evolving rapidly; time will test the margins of the product differences (Mullen et al., p.142).

Identifying the Problem

One of the issues with marketing women's basketball is the lack of attendance for women's collegiate athletics. The lack of media attention also bears some of the blame. In today's society, the media has a tendency to focus more on male athletes. Male athletes are generally bigger, stronger, and quicker than their counterparts (Ridinger and Funk, p. 157). In today's culture, these characteristics alone attract a larger audience.

The main focus for this marketing plan it is to sell more tournament ticket? books then the 2008 NCAA women's regional held in Greensboro, NC. If the goal is achieved, it will produce enough revenue to make a profit for both the NCAA and its tournament

host NC State University. The other goal is to generate awareness and enthusiasm by promoting this event to the target markets.

Significance

This marketing plan has a significant role in the success of this tournament. The NCAA with the help of NC State is providing student athletes the opportunity to compete in a post-season event. The RBC Center is considered one of the premier sporting arenas in the country. These student athletes will hopefully have a memorable and enjoyable experience while competing in Raleigh. Providing an electric atmosphere in the arena will allow the participating student athletes to walk away with a positive game day experience, and a trip to the final four for one lucky team.

Another significant factor for hosting the regional is the economic boost it will provide the city of Raleigh and surrounding communities. The increasing number of visitors from out of town means more business for local restaurants, retail stores, and hotels.

Since 2000, under the leadership of the Athletics Director, NC State has dedicated itself to being an active and noticeable member in the NCAA community. The RBC Center, formerly the Raleigh Entertainment and Sports Arena, was able to finalize a deal with NC State in 1998 which instantly gave the Wolfpack one of the top indoor arenas in the country. NC State immediately became a viable candidate to host any large upscale NCAA events including this years women's regional basketball tournament. "Hosting regional's in the future for both men and women's basketball is definitely a goal for NC State," said Dick Christy, Associate Athletics Director at NC State.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to answer the question, how can the 2009 Women's NCAA Regional Basketball Tournament be the most successful in terms of ticket sales from a marketing perspective? The central purpose of the project is to provide an effective marketing plan to sell tournament books. Selection Sunday, held March 8th 2009, will determine who is in the Raleigh regional, therefore making it impossible to market to any specific school or institution. This marketing plan will explore the common variables that will drive fans from specific markets and demographics to attend this event. There are critical factors that need to be examined to increase fan attendance for this event in Raleigh. Some major factors to bear in mind are team attractiveness, demographics, individual preferences, and economic considerations (Swanson, Gwinner, Larson, & Janda, p. 151).

Marketing plans can be developed in multiple ways. Before conducting a marketing plan, it is important to gather as much research as possible. The following examines different principles and theories that aid in developing the basis of a marketing plan. The principles of marketing within sport as well as in the business world are always being evaluated (Mullin, B., Hardy, S., Sutton, 2007). The focus of this research will relate to how marketing plans are developed; and developed specifically for marketing sports. The final part of the literature review will focus on marketing practices utilized for women's basketball.

The development of this marketing plan is dependent on several variables based on the product. For this plan specifically, the focus is on four different sections: goals,

marketing strategies and tactics, employing a workable budget, and the evaluation of the tournament.

The first portion of the plan will establish the goals. According to the marketing theory and practice, it is important to create goals to measure the outcome of the event (Mullin et al., p. 40). The main objective is increasing the overall attendance compared to the previous held regional held in Greensboro, NC in 2008. The Greensboro regional sold 472 tournament books. The ultimate goal in Raleigh is to sell 5,095 tournament books. The subjective goal will include providing a fun, family-friendly environment while creating an exciting championship atmosphere for the participating student-athletes, and generating high awareness and visibility for the sport.

The next portion of the plan focuses on establishing marketing strategies and tactics. Marketing strategies can be broken down into promoting and advertising the event, product placement, as well as public address announcements. The promotion of the event provides examples of public address announcements that will be used at home sporting events held at NC State. Advertisement of the tournament regional will be also used in areas such as the internet, specifically gopack.com, local television networks, local radio stations, and as well as local newspapers and other forms of print throughout the Triangle. All of these marketing tactics will be used beginning nine months prior to the tournament.

Another marketing tactic that will be established is game-day promotions. A game-day promotion includes any activities before, during and after the event. An example of a game-day promotion includes contest held at halftime of the event in which an individual can win a prize. The purpose is to increase the enjoyment of the event and

get the spectators involved. Game day promotions create a fun and exciting atmosphere (Ferrell, O.C. & Pride, W., p. 394).

Establishing an estimated budget for promoting this event is another important aspect of the marketing plan. It will be quite a challenge to work well within the budget that is proposed by NC State and approved by the NCAA. Obviously, important points to remember in arranging a budget is to consider items like the cost of advertising, the printing of tickets, and also providing game-day entertainment (ncaa.org, 2008).

The final portion of the marketing plan will be devoted to the event evaluation. Collecting data from ticket sales and surveys will help the NCAA evaluate the success of the tournament and will be critical to NC State hosting future regional basketball tournaments.

II. Literature Review

Marketing

The formal development of marketing strategies began in the 1950's. While marketing has been defined in many ways, the main target of marketing is the customer. The underlying focus of any marketing department is to appease the needs of the respective customer. While the purpose of marketing has always been the same, the means of establishing an effective marketing plan has varied. Many believe that effective marketing begins by assessing the customer's needs and then work backwards to develop the products and services to satisfy those needs (Hiam & Schewe, p.12). Sometimes marketers will assess customer preferences through surveys, personal meetings, or interviews to gain a better understanding of the customer. After receiving this revealing information from the customers, marketers will turn their research over to the people who actually produce the product. It then becomes the developers who produce the product's responsibility to design a product that fits the needs of the customer (Hiam & Schewe, p. 13).

Marketers and developers work tirelessly together to understand consumer needs. Marketing imagination is looking ahead of what the customer is saying and anticipating what the customer may really want. Most major innovations come from some extreme people within an organizations who have different ideas that will work and add value...a leap of imagination to see what the customer might want (Hiam & Schewe, p.15).

Typically these "leaps of imagination" are geared toward a specific group of buyers based on needs and wants, which is known as target marketing. Marketers need to

be able to recognize and analyze market opportunities. An organization must designate which customer groups the firm is trying to serve and gather as much accurate information. Identification and analysis of a target market provide a foundation on which a marketing mix can be developed (Ferrell, O.C. & Pride, W., p. 13).

The marketing mix involves the set of controllable variables that must be managed to satisfy the target market and achieve organizational objectives. The “four p’s”; product, price, place, and promotion comprise the tools of marketing. (Peter & Donnelly, p. 21) Since sport enjoys so much media attention, sport marketers have added another “p”. The fifth “p” is public relations, which is considered very similar to promotions (Mullen et al., p.44).

The first of the five “p’s” is product, which is the focal point of the marketing mix. A product includes more than a good or service that is designed, produced, or offered for sale. It includes all the planning that precedes the actual production including research and development.

The second “p” is price. Price is the cost, or what the buyer must give up, to receive the product. Although price usually means an amount of money, some exchanges include bartering, the exchange of goods and services by both parties. Price is not static.

The third “p” is place, or distribution. It involves making sure that the product is available where and when it is wanted. Marketers can choose many ways of moving a product to consumers. Distribution involves such decisions as how much inventory to hold, how to transport goods, and where to locate warehouses (Westerbeek, H.M., & Shilbury, D., p. 2)

The fourth “p” is promotion. It is perhaps the most visible to consumers. Promotion is the broad term used to describe the entire field of sales communication, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations. These activities result in consumer awareness of a products existence, as well as knowledge about unique desirable features. In short, promotion informs and persuades, and sometimes irritates the consumers (Hiam & Schewe, p. 18).

The fifth, and final “p” is public relations. Public relations are considered the broad set of communication efforts used to create and maintain favorable relationships between an organization and its consumers. Organizations use a variety of public relations tools to convey messages and to create images. Professionals in the public relations departments prepare written materials; including brochures, newsletters, magazines, and news releases that influence consumers (Ferrell, O.C. & Pride, W., p. 432).

Optimizing the five “p’s” of the marketing mix is the primary responsibility of marketing. By offering the product with the right combination of the five “P”s, marketers can improve their results and marketing effectiveness. Making small changes in the marketing mix is typically considered to be a tactical change. Making large changes in any of the five “p’s” can be considered strategic. For example, a large change in the price from \$19.00 to \$39.00 would be considered a strategic change in the position of the product. However a change of \$131 to \$130.99 would be considered a tactical change, potentially related to a promotional offer (Hiam & Schewe p.19).

Sports Marketing

Sport marketing operates under the same general theories and practices as

marketing. A sport marketing plan is a written document that specifies an organization's resources, objectives, marketing strategy, and the implementation and control efforts planned for a specific sporting event or season. The plan establishes marketing goals and objectives for the product or group. It also specifies how the organization will attempt to achieve these objectives (Ferrell, O.C. & Pride, W., p. 17).

“Sport marketing consists of all the activities designed to meet the needs and wants of sports consumers through exchange processes. Sports marketing has developed two major thrusts: the marketing of sport products and services to consumers of sport, and the marketing of other consumer and industrial products or services through the use of sport promotions” (Mullin et al., p. 11).

Sport marketing uses the “five p's”, but it generally focuses on product, market, finance, and promotion. There are many ways in which sport marketing is unique:

- The sport product is different because it is an intangible product and subjective. This characteristic makes it harder for the sports marketer to sell the sport product as a commodity that is standardized in quality.
- Sport involves competition, separation from “normal” time and space, regulation by specific rules, physical prowess and training, and special facilities.
- At its core, the sport product also offers a combination of basic needs such as health, entertainment, and the act of socializing to the customer. An additional element of the basic sport product is the actual game or event that makes it unusual (Westerbeek, H.M., & Shilbury, D., p. 12).

- Many sport organizations are simultaneously competitive and cooperative.

There are few organizations that can exist in isolation. Each organization must exist to establish meaningful competition.

- Consumers personally identify with the “experts” in the field and believe they are able to perform as well as the coaches, athletes, and officials.

- Eating and drinking. Anyone eating from a Wheaties cereal box or drinking from the Bud Light Penguin bottle can relate to the sport images put on food and beverage products.

- Demand is another distinctive aspect. Demand tends to fluctuate widely depending on the sport (Mullin et al., p. 19).

Sport promotion is another quality in marketing that is unique. The promotion of a sport deals with the widespread media attention that many sports may or may not receive. Sport teams receive free promotions daily through the Internet, newspaper, and radio. The widespread media exposure is sometimes a double-edged sword for an organization. For example, a smaller university that makes a run at college basketball’s sweet sixteen can make headlines across the country for being exposed as an underdog. The sweet sixteen is the final sixteen teams remaining in the NCAA national tournament. (ncaa.org, 2008) At a time of great competition in college admissions, a chancellor or president would take notice. On the one hand, this exposure is a blessing for the smaller universities that are sometimes financially strapped programs. However, on the other hand, free promotion can lead to complacency on the part of the sport marketer.

Sport marketers are also concerned with shaping the organizations image and may emphasize certain members of the team. The media and sponsors highlight specific

players as “celebrities”. This exposure can become problematic both inside and outside of a locker room. It is important for the sport marketer to take into account the uniqueness of each aspect of the marketing mix in order to be a successful marketer (Mullin et al., p.22).

The uniqueness of sport marketing makes the financing of sport that much more important. There are three major purposes when it comes to financing. First, it is hard to price the individual sport product unit by traditional job costing. For instance, it’s virtually impossible for a sport marketer to allocate fixed and operating costs to the individual ticket of membership. Therefore, pricing the sport product is often based on the marketer’s sense of consumer demand for certain seats, for certain times of day, and for certain privileges (Mullin et al., p. 20).

The second purpose involves the price of the sport product itself. It is invariably quite small in comparison to the total cost paid by the customer. It is the responsibility of the marketer to recognize the “hidden” costs of sports. For example, the cost of a ticket to a baseball game maybe only one third of a family’s total costs, which might include gas for traveling, parking, food, drinks and merchandise. Someone other than the team hosting the event perhaps controls all of these costs.

The last purpose deals with indirect revenues. Indirect revenues are frequently greater than the direct operating revenues. Income from fans is often not enough to cover the total expenses, especially debt service to the high-tech, shiny facilities that consumers demand. Sometimes in pro sports, the strain falls on the owners who are paying the players salaries too high. The direct-income-expense gap has focused more attention on media and sponsor revenues (Mullin et al., p. 21).

Marketing Women's Sports, specifically Basketball

Significant strides have been made over the past few decades in providing participation opportunities for girls and women in sport. Media visibility has increased for some female athletes such as Serena Williams, Annika Sorenstam, and Mia Hamm (Ridinger and Funk, p. 156). However, women's sports leagues continue to struggle to attract media attention and a solid fan base. In fact, the WNBA has not made a profit since its inaugural season in 1997 and is still experiencing declining attendance and below average television ratings. However, for women's college basketball, attendance figures are climbing and television ratings are drastically improving, but support for other women's sports at the collegiate level is marginal at best (Ridinger and Funk, p. 157).

Some believe that women's sports are caught in a "Catch 22" in terms of respect, recognition, and financial visibility. Many sports marketers, promoters, and corporate advertisers have treated fans of women's sports as second-class consumers (Branch, p.10). WNBA executives assert that more fans would care about the league if the media took a greater interest whereas the media claims it cannot justify devoting airtime to a sport that few people watch. More media attention is needed in order to attract sponsors and gain exposure, but women's sports are considered insignificant by the male-dominated sports media. (Ridinger and Funk, p. 158)

It has been widely known that male athletes are more guided by self-focused goals that are marked by self-efficacy, self-assertion and self-achievement (Swanson et al., p. 153). However, on the flip side females are more sensitive to the nuances of social interaction and seeking to facilitate interpersonal relationships suggests that the group affiliations is a greater influence on a spectator based behavioral intentions for women.

Understanding gender differences is important for sports marketers. Sport marketers realize that women tend to be more loyal and unselfish than men to a team. These characteristics contribute to a style of play that draws more attention to people of all ages who can relate to players working in an unselfish, team-oriented environment (Swanson et al., p. 154).

The steady rise of high-performance, commercialized women's team sports appears to be a case in alternative benefits more than demographics. In general, women's team sports attract a much wider range than their male counterparts. As the NCAA revealed, fans of women's basketball, regardless of age or gender, enjoy the game because in their minds it is distinctively different. The game does not involve the "above the rim" dunks. It involves articulate and more accessible athletes than the men (Swanson et al., p. 155). In order to be effective, sport marketers need to understand the factors that underlie women's basketball and their market. Gender tends to play more of a role in fan motivation, given the fact that women are in general more interpersonally oriented than men (Robinson, M.J., & Trail, G.T., p. 59).

It is the job of the sport marketer to understand women's sports and promote it with an affordable price. Pricing is influenced by many factors and is the most visible and readily communicable variable in marketing. The cost of a ticket to a women's sporting event is generally lower than its counterpart. Sport marketers realize that this is an important factor when it comes to promoting women's basketball. The price of ticket to a women's basketball event makes it much more affordable for an entire family to attend. It also influences the perceptions of quality and value that directly affects the product image (Fink, J.S., Trail, G.T., & Anderson, D.F., p.161).

While advertisers have traditionally sold sport to men, the market place for women is increasingly expanding. Women's sports, particularly basketball, are now being recognized as important to consumers. Chris Wright, the Chief Marketing Officer, of the WNBA's Minnesota Lynx, makes clear the league's audience in contending that demographics of the WNBA differ significantly than the NBA's. "The target of the WNBA is first women, then families, then business." This insight suggest that WNBA and collegiate women's basketball is now part of a larger sports marketing trend that appeals to an imaginary, essentialized, liberated consumer through affective strategies (McDonald, M. G. p. 38).

III. Methods

Setting

This marketing plan was created to increase overall ticket sales for the 2009 Women's NCAA Regional Basketball Tournament to be played on Saturday, March 28th and Monday, March 30th 2009 at the RBC Center in Raleigh. The RBC Center facility is multi-venue arena which host the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, North Carolina State men's basketball team, as well as many concerts and events throughout the year. The full capacity at the RBC Center is 19,248 but the arena will only seat 13,473 for this years regional.

Attendace for women's basketball varies depending on location and the teams competing. The regional basketball tournaments host four different teams, which qualify to play in the regional by winning the first and second rounds of the national tournament. Some of the attendance figures from last years regional sites are the following:

- University of Connecticut and Rutgers University regional final in Greensboro, NC; 4,623 sold tickets
- Tennessee-Texas A&M regional final in Oklahoma City, OK; 9,341 sold tickets
- LSU-North Carolina regional final in New Orleans, NO; 5,067 sold tickets
- Stanford-Maryland regional final in Spokane,WA; 6,821 sold tickets.

In Greensboro, Robert Bell (NCAA Committee member) reported the women's tournament "struggled to attract a paying audience." (www.sportsbusinessdaily.com, 2008) The main objective in this marketing plan is to increase the attendance compared to 2008 women's regional held in Greensboro, NC. The goal of this marketing plan is to

sell 5,095 tickets for the tournament, which would surpass the 2008 Greensboro Regional by 472 sold tickets..

Target Region and Audience

The primary target market for the marketing plan will be regional ACC institutions in the area and other division one institutions that could potentially compete in Raleigh. The primary factor for this target market is that local fans pay more attention to teams within the state, which would help generate interest and exposure for the event. Ticket sales could increase tremendously if a local university such as Duke, University of North Carolina, NC State University or Wake Forest were fortunate enough to play in Raleigh. Although many different types of advertising will be effective in reaching these groups, a predominant method will include sending out tournament brochures to all ACC institutions informing them and their fans of prices and dates of the tournament.

Demographics determine another large role in deciding whom to market this event too. In regards to marketing a women's basketball tournament, most marketers suggest promoting this type of event to women and senior citizens (Swanson et al., p. 152). This marketing plan incorporates demographic groups as well as target families/children, youth girls through 12th grade, adults 25-54, college students, and women's basketball season ticket holders at all the local major universities within North Carolina.

According to Swanson et al., (2003) another important dynamic in installing a marketing plan is to know your competition and understanding an individual's preferences. Clearly, it is understood that the NCAA men's basketball tournament is being held during the same time as the women's tournament in late March. The NCAA

does a great job in constructing these two tournaments on different days from one another, which allows the marketers to inform potential fans of the different game dates between tournaments and hopefully market and persuade those individuals to attend this event. The design of this plan is to have this event to stand out from other sporting events that are playing at the same time.

In addition to the demographics and regional marketing, an economic aspect will also apply to the marketing plan. With the current state of the economy, one of the most important marketing factors is that tickets are being sold at a reasonable price.

Economically, it is important to market an event that the average family can afford (Swanson et al., 2003). While working with the NCAA, it was determined ticket prices for adults will be \$50 and \$30 for student/youth (17 and under). The difference between a woman's event and men's is substantial. Last year, NC State University hosted the men's first and second rounds of the NCAA tournament at the RBC Center, tickets cost \$165.00 regardless of age (ncaa.org, 2008). The difference in price means that on average a family of four (two adults, two children) would save \$500.00 attending the women's tournament instead of the men's.

It is the hope of the marketers that the afore mentioned parts of the marketing plan and NC State's track record of hosting NCAA events will make this event successful. NC State has hosted numerous NCAA post-season events in the past and the 2009 NCAA women's basketball regional should be another great experience for all parties involved. Some notable past post-season events NC State has hosted in recent years are, the NCAA Women's and Men's Soccer College Cup, NCA basketball tournament for the 1st and 2nd Round for both men's and women's, and the NCAA baseball regional.

The marketing plan was created at the request of NC State University External Operations, a division of the NC State University Athletics Department and the NCAA. Consultants for the creation of this entire marketing plan included the associate athletic director, Mr. Richard Christy; assistant athletic director, Mr. Chris Alston; assistant director of marketing, Ms. Morgan Rogers; and tournament director, Ms. Adina Stock. Meetings are held monthly via conference calls from the NCAA to all schools hosting the NCAA Regionals regarding marketing plans and certain components such as tickets sales, target groups, marketing strategies, and print advertising.

Timeline

The timeline involved with developing and implementing the marketing plan is listed below:

PA at Greensboro Regional	March 2008
Splash page launched on gopack.com	July 2008
Flyers distributed youth basketball camps held at NC State	July-August 2008
Email blasts to NC State fans	July 2008
NC State women's basketball season ticket brochure mailing	August 2008
PA/Video at NC State Football games	September-November 2008
Booth with ticket information at Red/White game	October 2008
Flyer offering incentive to NC State men's basketball season ticket holders	October 2008
PA at NC State, Duke, UNC, and Wake Forest women's basketball games	November-March 2008-09
PA/video at NC State men's basketball games	November-March 2008-09

Place ticket information in the Wolfpacker	January 2009
Information at both men and women's ACC tournament	March 2009
Banner at all women's basketball games	November-March 2008-09
Send out mailing to Duke, UNC, and Wake Season ticket holders	November 2008
Booth with ticket information at Hoops for Hope	February 2008

IV. Results

Marketing Plan

The marketing plan for 2009 Women's NCAA regional basketball tournament is divided into four different sections: goals, marketing strategies and tactics, a workable budget, and an evaluation. The NCAA supplies the host institution with a blank marketing plan template (Appendix A). The host institution then submits a completion to the NCAA the marketing plan back for approval. The following provides specific descriptions of each section of the plan.

Goals

In order to develop a marketing plan, it is important to establish goals and objectives that can be used as an evaluation tool upon completion of the tournament. The marketing plan for the 2009 NCAA women's basketball regional is no exception. Goals help establish a purpose behind the promotional efforts. They also help in the evaluation of the outcome of an event. It is important to realize that there are different types of goals that can be implemented into a marketing plan. Goal setting is a challenging task and must be given serious thought. Goals need to be set high, but at the same time they need to be realistic and achievable. There are two different types of goals utilized in this regional; objective and subjective goals.

Objective goals are those that can be evaluated based on the statistics. The main objective goal of the marketing plan for the 2009 NCAA regional is to increase the attendance from the 2008 regional held in Greensboro, NC (A breakdown of regional books sold can be found on page 17 of this project). Marketing efforts will be focused regionally and target the regional institutions in the area and other division one

institutions that could potentially compete in Raleigh. With this being said, an unknown variable are the teams that will take part in the Raleigh regional which is based on the winners of the 1st and 2nd rounds of the tournament. The evaluation of the goal at the end of the event cannot be shaded by individual perception because the goal itself deals only in numbers and percentages.

The second goal utilized through the marketing plan is known as a subjective goal. Subjective goals are considered intangible goals. They are not necessarily based strictly on data, but must be looked at from various points of observation. The subjective goal of the tournament is to provide a fun and friendly atmosphere for everyone involved. This includes the participating teams, fans, and staff involved with making this a successful tournament. In order to evaluate subjective goals, surveys will be distributed to fan groups during the tournament (Appendix B). Student volunteers from the marketing department will set up tables throughout the concourse of the arena and distribute the surveys to fans who choose to participate.

It is important to establish goals prior to creating a marketing plan for a variety of reasons. First, in developing a successful plan, goals help shape your ideas in the marketing plan. Since the main objective is to sell more tournament books than the 2008 Greensboro regional, marketing efforts will be focused on increasing the attendance and encouraging fans to purchase tickets to the tournament. A second goal is to provide a competitive, yet fun environment. With these goals in place, along with various types of promotions and advertisements, there is no reason to not be able to achieve the goals set.

Marketing Strategies and Tactics

The main marketing strategies and tactics will focus on target markets. Target markets are specific to the regional being played in Raleigh and the identified demographic target. Here are the target markets:

1. Adults 25-54
2. College Students
3. Families/Children
4. Girls through 12th grade
5. Senior Citizens
6. Basketball season ticket holders from regional universities

The target markets have been identified through research and hosting prior tournaments. The goal is to reach each market through different outlets. The two different outlets utilized are: promotions and game-day promotions.

Promotions

The promotion of the event is broken up into two subcategories: public address announcements and advertisements. The first subcategory is public address announcements. Public address announcements for the 2009 NCAA women's regional began at the 2008 regional in Greensboro. NC State will promote the event at their football and men's and women's basketball games this season. In the script for each home game, there will be at least one mention of the 2009 NCAA women's regional. Here is a detailed script of what is addressed at each home game:

“The 2009 Women’s NCAA basketball regional will be hosted by NC State here at the RBC Center. Make your plans now to attend this event on March 28th and 30th, 2009. For tickets, call the NC State ticket at 919/865-1510 or go online to gopack.com.”

Helping the NCAA out with this effort to sell tickets are other North Carolina universities and colleges. They will assist in the promotion by using the same public address announcements at their home events as well. These schools include the following: Duke, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Wake Forest.

The second subcategory of promotion is advertising. Advertising focuses on four types of media including print, radio, internet, and television.

The first type of advertising is print advertising. Print advertising began during the 2008 women’s regional in Greensboro with each patron receiving a fan guide. The fan guide had a page devoted to the 2009 regional in Raleigh. A bulk of the print advertising will be placed in the Raleigh News & Observer and the Wolfpacker (an independent magazine covering NC State sports). Once the four teams are announced, print advertisements will run in the local newspapers of the teams competing.

Another form of print advertisement will be a flier that is sent out to NC State men’s basketball season ticket holders. The flier is an incentive that offers two tickets and a parking pass to a men’s game versus University of North Carolina (Appendix C).

Other print advertising will include possibly running a billboard ad. NC State is currently working with the NCAA on a billboard that will be displayed on a local highway. The video scoreboard at NC State men’s basketball games will also have a thirty second ad produced by the NCAA. The matrix at women’s basketball games will also include ticket information and dates for the regional.

Ticket brochures is the last form of print advertisement (Appendix D). Ticket brochures were mailed to the following:

- NC State, UNC-CH, Duke, and Wake Forest Women's basketball season ticket holders
- Other local universities including Peace, Meredith, NCCU, Shaw U., Elon, and High Point
- High Schools/Middle/Elementary Schools within an hour and half radius of Raleigh
- Wolfpack Women's Basketball Campers
- Junior Wolfpack Club Member
- Wolfpack Club Women's Focus Group and Women's Endowment Group
- Pines of North Carolina Girl Scouts
- Raleigh and Cary Parks and Recreation Groups
- Y-Guides/Princess and YMCA
- Pack Backers and Pine Needles List
- Raleigh Sports Council
- Raleigh Chamber of Commerce/Women in Business Members
- GWIS

The next form of advertising is radio media. Radio announcements will also be utilized and begin approximately three weeks prior to the tournament. The three local radio stations involved are *Mix 101.5*, *K97.5* and *Sunny 93.5*. The tournament will also be advertised on local campus radios, all Wolfpack Club affiliates, and as well as Coach

O'Brien's and Coach Lowe's Radio Show. Radio advertisements will run up until the day of the event. Also, during the tournament weekend, coaches and athletes will be interviewed from the competing teams to discuss the tournament and build awareness and excitement. An example of advertisement/promotion from a radio station includes "Be the 5th caller to Mix 101.5 and win two tickets to the NCAA Division 1 Women's Basketball Raleigh Regional being hosted by NC State March 28th and 30th".

The third type of advertising is the internet. The marketing department at NC State has run internet advertisements on the athletics website (www.gopack.com) in the form of pop-ups since August. Gopack.com has a link on its homepage that directs fans to buy tickets to the NCAA Raleigh regional. The website contains ticket prices, dates of the regional, a map of the RBC Center, travel information, and also hotel information for fans. In conjunction with gopack.com the information has been posted on or will be posted on the following websites:

- NBC.com Community Calender
- Chamber of Commerce
- Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau
- RBC Center
- WRAL.com
- NewsandObserver.com

The final type of advertisement is television. Starting two weeks prior to the event, two different advertisements will be placed on a variety of televeison channels. One of the advertisements will be general and discuss the appropriate information regarding dates and prices of the tournament. The second advertisement provides

information on the four teams competing and will only run during the week of the tournament. The advertisements will run on a number of television stations that still have yet to be determined. NC State and the NCAA will have an opportunity to choose from two different holiday packages that Time Warner Cable provides. Each package includes a variety of channels with close to one hundred and fifty commercials.

Game-Day Promotions

The other marketing outlet to take place is the game-day promotions. The primary purpose of any game-day promotions is to provide the fans with the ultimate experience. It allows the opportunity for NC State and the NCAA to showcase all the major corporate sponsorships that are involved with the regional. The planning for the game day promotions begins when the NCAA comes for the initial site visit, December 16th 2008, at which time the discussions of game-day promotions takes place. It is mainly brainstorming different ideas of planning. The people involved in this brainstorming include the sponsors, the NCAA committee, and NC State marketing office.

A great example of a game-day promotion is the practice of give-aways. During each game of the tournament, there will be give-aways to the first two thousand fans to enter the RBC Center. The give-aways have yet to be determined but past give-aways have been T-shirts, towels, or cups. The give-aways for the regional will be decided by NC State and members of the NCAA committee.

Performing contests goes hand in hand with game-day promotions. During halftime of each game, there will be an on-court promotion. The fans participating will have a chance to win special prizes and gifts. The nature of the contest will be chosen by the sponsors of the tournament, the NCAA committee, and NC State's marketing

department. Some different ideas have been asking trivia questions pertaining to former NCAA women's basketball events and also having raffle prizes being given away.

Workable Budget

The initial steps in developing a budget for the 2009 Women's regional began by meeting with a committee put together by the NC State Athletic Department. The committee gathered figures and provided them to the NCAA. There are certain restrictions enforced by the NCAA that limits how much marketing can be applied for the tournament. The NCAA is extremely strict with the amount of money they will allow each host to use for the tournament. The tournament budget is divided into three components; it includes the expenses, income, and the overall balance of the regional. The expense portion of the budget was developed from previous budgets of regionals held in the past. The budget includes the costs of advertising, postage, printing, radio/television advertisements, and online advertising. The income portion of the budget is the estimated amount of sales we anticipate if the goal of selling 5,095 tickets is carried out.

Expenses

A. Promotion

a. Advertising (print, radio, television, internet)	\$15,000
b. Postage	\$500
c. Printing	\$1,000

B. Tickets

a. Postage	\$250
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C. Equipment

a. Shuttle	\$750
b. Office Machines	\$250

D. Facility	
a. Supplies, Décor, Ambulance, Directional signs	\$17,000
E. Personnel	
a. Public Address Announcer	\$150
b. Timer	\$150
c. Scorer	\$150
d. Statisticians	\$1,500
F. Entertainment	
a. Media Buffet	\$10,000
b. Participation refreshments	\$2,000
c. Administration Meetings	\$500
d. Game Officials meeting	\$500
Total Budget Expenses	\$49,700

Income

A. Estimated Ticket Receipts	
a. Ticket Type	
1. Adult	\$ 204,255
2. Youth	-

Balance

Income – Expenses:

a. $\$204,255 - \$49,700 = \$154,555$

Evaluation

The evaluation of the women’s regional in Raleigh is divided into two categories. In order to determine the appropriate method of evaluation it is important to review the different goals set forth at the beginning of the marketing plan. There were two types of goals at the beginning of the marketing plan, objective and subjective. Each goal must

undergo a different method of evaluation in order to evaluate the success of the tournament. The main objective goal mentioned in the marketing plan was to surpass the 2008 Greensboro Women's Regional. In order to determine whether this goal is accomplished, one can analyze the data from the Greensboro Regional and compare tickets sold. The objective goal was to sell 5,095 ticket which would surpass the Greensboro Regional by 472 sold tickets.

The objective goal is arguably easier to evaluate than the subjective goals that were determined at the beginning of the marketing plan. However, subjective goals can be evaluated easily when you correctly implement surveys. This insight is important because as previously stated in the literature review, all athletic events are considered intangible products and are generally hard to evaluate without surveys. It is important to realize that surveys can provide insight into the whole gameday experience not only for the fans but everyone involved.

As a way to entice fans, free give-aways will be given to all fans who complete the survey. The survey will be based on the perception of the fans experience at the tournament. The surveys are a combination of demographics, likert scale questions (rated from 1-5) and open ended questions.

The evaluation of the event is important on two different levels. First, it will determine the level of success of the tournament. Through evaluating the numbers and the surveys, it will provide an understanding of the overall success of the event. Success of the regional held in Raleigh will provide a opportunity for NC State Univeristy and Raleigh to hold future NCAA post-season events. The NCAA will be more inclined to accept a bid from NC State University if the tournament is deemed a success. An

evaluation of the regional is important not only for the host site but the NCAA as well.

All of the information provided in the evaluation will be utilized for an overall

assessment that will be completed by the NCAA.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths of the marketing plan include:

- Four division one ACC institutions (NC State, University of North Carolina, Wake Forest, and Duke) are within 120 mile radius of Raleigh which creates awareness for the regional. The likelihood that one of these local ACC institutions may have the opportunity to play here in Raleigh will attract more fans in this area
- The Raleigh area is considered a college market for athletics
- Five unique attributes that define the women's college basketball games: the student-athletes play a fundamentally sound game, the game features a high level of quality play and competition, players are seen as role models for young women, players demonstrate a high level of sportsmanship, and the game provides a family-brand of entertainment
- The RBC Center, is one of the premier arena's in the nation and has hosted many NCAA events
- The regional winner will play in the Final Four of the NCAA women's basketball tournament
- Fans have the opportunity to win prizes and receive free give aways
- The price of tickets are affordable

- Fliers were sent out to specific markets enticing fans to purchase regional tickets. Information in the flier included a drawing in which a fan can purchase two or more regional tickets and win two courtside tickets and a parking pass to the NC State vs. North Carolina men's basketball game

Weaknesses of the marketing plan include:

- The state of the economy, consumers are not willing to spend disposable income
- Women's college basketball is a non-revenue sport. The budget to spend money on promoting this event is limited
- Lack of media attention in the area
- Teams at this time are unknown, it will be difficult to market specific institutions

V. Discussion

It is widely known that the state of marketing is never constant; it is an ever-changing practice. Research has indicated the industry of marketing is reliant on the consumer's frame of mind and marketers must be able to adapt to the impulses of society. In the case of sport marketing and specifically marketing women's basketball, the marketer must go above and beyond the normal expectations to create an impressive and memorable occasion for everyone involved. Marketing plans are constantly changing. It is important for marketers to have the ability to adjust to the different desires and needs of the consumers. However, if a firm marketing plan is in place, as presented in this project, it will allow for the sports marketer to have the ability to adjust in order to produce a better experience and atmosphere for the spectators involved.

Fans deserve to be awarded with fun and exciting atmosphere. The development and implementation of a marketing plan is essential to the success of any sporting event. Through research and practices, it was determined that this marketing plan serves two purposes. First, it proves that NC State University Athletics Department has the ability to carry out a successful tournament and represent the NCAA. Second, it will provide a guideline for NC State with the preparation of this tournament.

The process of developing a marketing plan for the 2009 women's regional has been a very rewarding experience from start to finish. It was important to look at previous marketing plans created by NC State's marketing department and then proceed to make adjustments in order to design the best possible marketing plan for this tournament. At times it was difficult complying with the regulations set forth by the NCAA specifically dealing with a limited budget. Most marketing plans are produced

with the intent of marketing a sport for an entire season, this plan was designed for a two day event. Unlike other marketing plans, it became clear that this marketing plan needed to be detail oriented. In order for this plan to succeed, it was important to incorporate specific tactics and strategies used in other marketing plans for marketing post season college athletic events.

One necessary component when incorporating a marketing plan is to have specific goals and objectives. The marketer has no basis for evaluating the success of the tournament without setting specific goals. The main objective goal was to surpass the 2008 Greensboro regional in ticket sales. Right now with four months remaining until the event we have sold only 255 tournament books, which means there is some work to be done in order to reach the goal. The goal of selling 5,095 tickets is still attainable with the majority of advertising and promoting starting in January,

A couple distractions from this marketing plan include not having the ability to target specific institutions and also the lack of feedback from the NCAA committee. After implementing the marketing plan, the NCAA has given little feedback on the purposed budget. Hopefully after meeting with the NCAA committee on December 16th, they will provide more insight and feedback on the marketing plan.

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