STRENGTHEN THE RELATIONSHIP OF SPORT ORGANIZATION AND MASS MEDIA IN ORDER TO PROMOTE SPORT EVENTS

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to provide an overview of the importance to create, build and strengthen the relationship between sports organizations that exist with the mass media in order to help facilitate promotional activities range from sports activities all sports. It is important to managing the sport organizations and media relations because mass media is one of the key public of organizations that perhaps has the greatest potential that can effect the sport organization and the sports itself. Sport organizations do not view the mass media merely as a channel through which they can distribute messages. There are a much closer relationship exists between the media and sport organizations. They are the two partners in delivering sport content to consumers. Organizations stage event, and mass media outlets distribute information about the events.

Keywords: Sport Organization, Mass Media, Promote Sport Event

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INTRODUCTION

Sport is a distinctive social activity that is frequently the basis of a person’s social identify (Coakley, 2009). As such, it is a social institution of astonishing magnitude and influence. What other social pursuit is allotted several pages in the daily newspaper, has its own slot on every television and radion news program, has its own cable channels, and creates what appears to be an international withdrawal crisis when members of its workforce go on strike? The General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) publicly recognized the power of sport when – in adopting a resolution titled “Sport as a means to promote education, health, development, and peace” – it declared 2005 the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (United Nations, 2004).

Further noting the major role that sport can play in promoting the UN goals of peace, dignity, and prosperity, the executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) stated, “The way sports events are run, the way sporting goods companies do business, and the way sports stars conduct themselves on and off the field can have profound effects far beyond the financial bottom line (Toepfer, 2003, p. 9). Today sport is a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse industry. Because sport is the most precious commodity we can hand on to the next generation. Increased amounts of discretionary income, a heightened awareness of the relationship between an active life style and good health, and a greater number of opportunities to participate in sport have all contributed to this growth. The level of participation and degree of excellence attained within a given sport is dependent, at least in part, on how that sport is organized. That's why organizational become an integral and pervasive part of the sport industry.

For most of us, sport implies having fun, but it can also be work (for a professional athlete), a means of employment (for a sport tourism director), or a business (for a sport marketing agency). Sports entertainment is a multibillion-dollar consumer decision. The proven ability of sports to influence consumer behavior off the field of play drives the chameleon forces of “sponsorship”, the powerful turnkey that identifies sports entertainment properties with products and services around the world. Sponsors choose from hundreds of events and sponsorship packages to identify with their existing markets and expand into others.

The springboard for all promotions is the competition. With so much interest focused on competition, shrewd sponsors pay to identify and interrupt the action to promote their products and services. Thousands of relationships like the ANTV- ISL (Indonesian Soccer League) connection exist between sponsors and promoters. These contractual relationships all aim to enhance the visibility of the event and its sponsoring products and services. The efforts to capitalize on the relationship result in the many product promotions at consumer venues. For example, The 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics had eighteen major sponsors signed up two to four years in advances. Familiar names like Coca-coal, McDonald’s VISA, IBM, Kodak, Xerox and the others jointly paid over $500 million to identify with the Olympic Games at the event site, during television broadcasts,
and through retail opportunities like ticket application distribution, contents and logo reproduction on commemorative packaging.

Fans are the basis for the financial growth of sports. They participate in many forms like buying tickets, watching broadcasts, listening to the radio, reading newspapers, magazines and journals, etc. As a group they annually spend $6 billion to attend the events and, as a household, they spend 178 hours watching them on television at home. That is a reasonable fee to communicate with more than one half of the country. The incredible fees that promoters, leagues, and broadcasters earn all goes back into the same sports cycle to create more events, attract more athletes, and upgrade facilities to keep the fans and sponsor content with their investment. That's why we need to strengthen the relationship of sport organization and mass media in order to promote sport events.

THEORITICAL VIEW

Before we talk about sports organizations, mass media and the relationship between the two of them, it's better to know the definition of sports itself. The definition of sport according to the council of Europe (2001, p.1) as: “all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels”. Similarly, Pitts, Fielding and Miller (1994, p. 18) stated that sport is “any activity, experience, or business enterprise for which the primary focus is fitness, recreation, athletics, and leisure related”. And then, we defined what is organization. Daft (2010, p.11) defined organization as “social entities that are goal-directed, are designed as deliberately structured and coordinated activity systems, and are linked to the external environment. Coordinated actions lead to the creation of social entities (i.e. organizations) in which people work collectively to achieve goals. In essence, people work collectively because achieving goals is often easier when working together rather than working independently.

Definition about sports organizations according to Daft (1989) and Robbins (1990) is: “A sport organization is a social entity involved in the sport industry; it is goal directed, with a consciously structured activity system and a relatively identifiable boundary”. There are five key elements in this definition, there are: Social entity, involvement in the sport industry, goal-directed focus, consciously structured activity system, and identifiable boundary. Sport organizations are goal-seeking entities, structured to achieved a particular purpose (or purposes). The goals of sport organization are extremely important for communicating its purpose and identity, to both employees and to external constituents.

After we talk about what is sport organization, then we should know definiision about mass media. In the broadest sense of the word, a medium is the channel through which a message travels from the source to the receiver (“medium” is singular, “media” is plural). When we talk about mass communication, we also need channels to carry the message. Mass media are the channels
used for mass communication. The definition of a mass medium will include not only the mechanical devices that transmit and sometimes store the message (TV cameras, printing presses) but also the institutions that use these machines to transmit messages.

Scholars have divided mass media forms into print and electronic (Black & Bryant, 1995). Print media include newspapers, magazines, and books, whereas electronic media include radio, televisions and film. Most sport managers refer to print and electronic media simply as the media. Pedersen, Miloch, and Laucella (2007) distinguish among three segments of sport mass media: publishing and print communication, electronic and visual communication, and new media. Sage (1998, p.160) suggested that the media’s power comes from four areas: constitutional protection, universal access to the public, corporate organization, and ability to construct ideology.

Sport organizations do not view the mass media merely as a channel through which they can distribute messages. A much closer relationship exists between the media and sport organizations. In essence, the two are partners in delivering sport content to consumers. Organizations stage events, and mass media outlets distribute information about those events. Advertisers use the mass media’s distribution channels to gain access to targeted consumer market's and consumers buy products sold by those advertisers. Bernstein and Blain (2002, p.3) noted that “sport and the media have become associated to such an extent that it is often difficult to discuss sport in modern society without acknowledging its relationship with media”.

Indeed, it is impossible to distinguish the mass media from today’s sport consumption experience, but that relationship has not always been this close. Many sport organizations initially viewed the media as a threat to profitability rather than a revenue stream. Emphasis is placed on sport as entertainment by addressing adaptations that sport organizations have made for benefit of the media as well as sport created solely for television. So, we need what we call media relations. The aim of media relations is to foster desirable relationships with members of the mass media. Media relations programs are designed to generate favorable publicity and minimize unfavorable publicity. Publicity may be thought of as information regarding the sport product or organization conveyed free through the mass media. There are two models that commonly describe the practice of sport media relations which are:

- The first is a press agency and publicity model (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Practitioners employing this model seek to cultivate as much publicity as possible for their organizations. The press agency and publicity model is also often used in ethical fashion. Because one of the primary purposes of media today’s is to generate favorable publicity in advance of the new season.

- The second model is a public information model that focuses on providing effective service to members of the mass media who are already inclined to cover the sport organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Professionals using this model because they do not
want to risk embarrassing their organization by using questionable methods to seek attention.

Sometimes media relations professionals within a single organization use both proactive and reactive models depending on the season or time of year. Media relations professionals can sometimes negate unfavorable publicity by advising members of their organizations how to avoid public relations mistakes. They can choose to withhold embarrassing or damaging facts from members of the media. They can even lead their organization in successfully weathering a crisis when embarrassing or damaging facts about the organization have been publicized. The relationships between sport organization and the mass media are also influenced periodically by the urgency of the collective bargaining process. Each of these relational attributes influences the priority of the relationship between the two parties and demonstrates the dynamic nature of the relationship.

**DISCUSSION**

Both sports and mass media keep trying to reach people as spectators, fans, and consumers; both actively affect the audience as well as the advertising market (including the sponsors). The stars of sport, the athletes, have become never-ending sources of inspiration for the construction of stories to be told. Today, sport is a never-ending source of characters and plots for the mass media. Modern stories about good and bad, success and failure, luck and misfortune, victory and defeat, things native and foreign, group identity and emotion are all recounted in their most popular of expressions - sports narration. The cultural importance of sport is unquestionable when we realize that "media-sport", besides satisfying the symbolic needs of the identification of groups and nations, also satisfies the needs of the "tele-athletes" fantasies.

The focus of sport organizations is the events in which they participate, it is tempting to think that the relationship between media and organization is based solely on those events. Because there are three event triangle members that promote interdependence and financial success for each other. The simple act of the audience seeking event entertainment sets into motion the sponsors subsidy mechanism, which further promotes the event and the products’ upon it throughout its sales channels. The Event triangle explains three basic things about event marketing:

a. Events showcase and sell the personalities and competitive talents of the athletes
b. Events demonstrate the promoting organizations’ marketing
   Events promote and sell the products and services of its sponsors.

An events seek identifying sponsors to subsidize their costs, such as facility rental, maintenance, administrative and athlete labor contracts, and the concession expenses. The costs have to be paid and who will pay for the cost? The public will. Most sport organizations employ a
variety of tactics to communicate with their publics, many of which do not rely on the involvement of mass media.

The symbiotic relationship between the mass media and sport began to play a prominent role in American society in the 1920s, when sport emerged as a social institution. But in the present era of rising player salaries and facility costs, sport organizations depend more than ever on the rights fees paid by broadcasters and on the free publicity that the media provide. Occasionally, mass media organizations create their own programming, thereby eliminating the need to pay rights fees for a product. Still other media have tried to expand their brand across multiple platforms of mass media. Pitts and Stotlar (2007, p. 30) observed that companies “can link promotional activities and fan participation activities, thus enticing the fan (consumer) to use products all produced by the same company”.

So, to maintain and strengthen the relationship of sport organization and mass media in order to promote sport events, there are four steps which must be consider. There are:

a. Identifying Influential media.

   Media are gatekeepers who decide which stories they will cover. This decision is based on several factors, and is sometimes referred to as agenda setting, meaning that the media raise issues that both they and their audience consider important. One way that public relations can monitor the media agenda is through developing relationships with the media, particularly those who cover the organization on a regular basis.

b. Serving Media at Organizational Events

   Many members of the media attend organizational events to report firsthand on what transpired. Working with media at these organization events is a key part of any public relation’s job. Sport public relations professionals must understand the needs of media members who cover organizational events and provide services for them. The aspect of the organization-media relationship is unique to the sport industry. At any given sporting event, media members covering the event need a place to observe the event, a place to work on their stories, access to statistics and other related information, and access to the participants after the event for stories and opinions.

   In addition, representative of the different types of mass media have different needs, much of the media are in competition with each other, and some of the media in attendance have likely never been to the facility in which the event is taking place.


   Sport organizations command a high level of media attention, so sport managers should consider developing a media policy. Mathews (2004, p.46) defined a media policy as “a set of guiding principles and behaviors to help ensure consistent, fair and ethical communication with all of your constituents”. Those principles and behaviors should include
identifying who within the organization speaks to the media, what employees should do if they are contracted by the media. These policies should apply when individuals are being interviewed for a media story and are not just playing an information services role.

The organizational spokesperson is the voice of the organization and answers the media’s questions. The spokesperson may be a senior member of the organization, such as a president or general manager, or may be one of the organization’s public relations. Some sport organizations develop role based on the information that the media are seeking. Senior management may speak on topics of importance and the public relations may address routine operations. A final rule of thumb for identifying an organizational spokesperson is to allow the person who has the greatest knowledge, and thus the highest degree of credibility, about a given subject to speak on behalf of the organization.

Maximize positive publicity for an organization

The goal for most sport organizations is to achieve the pinnacle of athletic success. When that singular moment comes along and the organization finds itself on top of the athletic world, it enjoys a unique public relations opportunity. This opportunity requires the public relation to act quickly to help the organization achieve as much exposure as possible. Without the support of organizational management, however, gaining maximum exposure can be difficult. It is easy to get caught up in the excitement of winning a world championship or an Olympic medal. Athletes want to share these moments with teammates, friends, and family. The public relations needs to convince management and the athletes that using the media is a positive way to capitalize on that excitement.

The key to maximizing exposure in such situations is for the public relations person to know the organization’s product. In the sense, the job is similar to marketing. The public relations must know what makes the product unique, how to package and position the product and how to sell it to the media. As an example, consider the Olympic Games. No sporting event in the world receives as much media exposure as the Olympics. It is hard to imagine the Olympics without swimming, diving, gymnastics, basketball and the other major sports, and media members actively seek stories on those sports because the public is interested in them.

CONCLUSION

Strengthen and managing the sport organization-media relationship is a demanding but critical responsibility assigned to many sport public relations. Sport public relations must first identify the influential media members with whom they will interact, and they must understand the differing ways in which those media members work. For instance, a newspaper columnist has different needs than a television reporter. After media relationships have been identified, significant planning is necessary to serve the diverse members of the media, particularly at games and other
events. Defining medi accreditation policies, providing adequate workspace, and offering critical services such as technology support and statistical reports are important aspects of service planning. Because media interest in many sport organizations extends beyond game days, other organizational media policies may be necessary, ranging from defining appropriate organizational spokespersons to specifying interview policies. Finally, because the goal of media relations is to generate maximum positive publicity for the sport organization, sport public relations must be able to define the unique aspects of their product, position the product in ways that make it attractive to members of the media, and pitch those members on the newsworthiness of the product.

REFERENCES