Bridging the Gap Between Research, Education, and the Sports Industry

The size of the entire sports industry is estimated to be near $500 billion making it one of the top ten largest industries in the United States. In addition, the sports industry is becoming increasingly global. As the entire sports industry grows, the teams, facilities, and other assets significantly increase in value, and the domestic and international issues facing the industry become more complex. Closing this gap becomes all the more timely and important. This is one of the cornerstones of The Center for Sports Business & Research (CSBR) at the Penn State Smeal College of Business.

Sport Business Research

The CSBR offers collaboration on academic research, practitioner research, and consulting services designed to address industry and sports-specific, company-centered business issues. We tend to focus on the demand side of the various components of the sports industry. Our research allows sports-related businesses to maximize the impact of their marketing expenditures, and we have worked with various sports organizations on issues involving fan avidity, customer satisfaction, market segmentation, consumer perceptions measurement, promotion response, and fan attendance drivers.

In a recent project, we examined and identified factors that drive attendance for Major League Baseball (MLB), as well as the role game day promotions have on fan attendance and subsequent profitability. Through our research, we were able to discover optimal promotion schedules that would maximize expected profitability. This research was featured in an article published in the *Sports Business Journal* for a particular MLB team.

Our research has also appeared in top academic journals such as *Marketing Science*, the *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Management Science*, and *Psychometrika*.

The CSBR has particular expertise and interest in the following marketing-related application areas of sports business research: market segmentation, customer satisfaction/service quality assessment, new product/service design, analysis of competition, positioning, consumer choice, brand equity, pricing and demand estimation, promotional response, fan avidity and preference, advertising effectiveness, consumer behavior, optimal resource allocation, and demographic analyses.

In addition, we partner with many colleagues within Smeal and at the University, including the Penn State College of Communications, Penn State Law, and the Penn State Department of Kinesiology in this effort.

Academic Programs

The CSBR sponsors academic programs as part of its multifaceted mission. The academic initiative educates students about the unique aspects of the sports industry. This is especially important for students who plan to combine their business degree and functional marketing major with a recently approved sports marketing focus and enter the industry after graduation.
The Sports Marketing Focus
Marketing students in Smal are able to earn a business degree with a major in marketing and a focus in sports marketing. This is an education model that has been praised by sports industry executives as a preferred way to educate students who want to work in the sports industry.

Courses of Study
The sports marketing focus has been designed by CSBR in collaboration with its advisory board comprised of leading academics and practitioners in the field of sports marketing and business. Completing this focus of study with a functional marketing major will benefit students seeking employment in the sports industry or in related areas that interface with sports organizations.

Recommended courses include (select at least three courses):
- MKTG 497B (3): Sports Business
- MKTG 443 (3): Sports Marketing
- MKTG 497A (3): Sports Marketing Analytics
- MKTG 428 (3): Advanced Sales Management or MKTG 410 (3): Personal Selling

Smeal students are encouraged to augment this training with related courses selected as electives, as well as a summer internship in the sports industry.

Industry Strategic Partnerships
The CSBR has established connections with the large concentration of professional sports league offices, professional teams, and sports media organizations. Through these connections, we create opportunities for research, academic and other forms of programming, career development, and placement assistance for students looking to pursue a career in the world of sports.

Employment Opportunities
Career opportunities within the sports business include:
- Sports teams and leagues
- Sports organizations such as PGA, Olympics, and NCAA
- University athletic departments
- Sports marketing agencies
- Broadcast sports media companies
- Companies that market and advertise through sports

The Top Companies that Market through Sports

- Ford Motor Company
- GEICO
- GM
- Microsoft
- NIKE
- Pepsico
- Southwest Airlines
- Sprint
- T-Mobile
- Toyota
- Warner Brothers
- Visa

CSBR Highlights
Consider some of the other factors that help to enhance the environment for sports marketing students at the Smeal College of Business:

Penn State Marketing Association (PSMA)
PSMA is one of the largest student-run organizations at Penn State and is recognized annually as one of the premier American Marketing Association collegiate chapters in the nation. Offering four divisions in which to get involved, including sports marketing, PSMA provides its members with networking opportunities and an outlet for professional and personal growth.

Penn State Sports Business Club
The Penn State Sports Business Club fosters the growth of students’ knowledge in the sports industry by learning from professionals in the field and provides students with opportunities for internships and/or future careers in sports and similar fields.

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