MARKETING DEVELOPMENT IN SPORTS UNITS

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Abstract

Marketing is more and more frequent in two sectors, as culture and sport, which present various similitudes from the point of view of the labour conscription realization and of the consummation. Marketing is a modern science, perfectly adapted to answer, through practical action, to demands of superior accomplishment of individual or group necessities and wishes, and of economical efficiency criteria.

While treating the concept of the marketing there is necessary to underline three important characteristics of each organization oriented towards the market: orientation towards the client, the integrated effort and the focalization of the purposes.

The marketing department from a sports unit is considered as responsible for the new products presentation, for the apparition of favorable press articles, for the realization of market studies and for the rending of support arguments for those who deal with sale.

Marketing people need to collaborate with the advertising agencies, to analyze and solve clients complaints, to establish criteria and help them choosing the new products and to organize their promotion campaigns. Therefore, the main marketing function is to present the sports unit and its products to potential customers.

Keywords: *marketing, product, sale, sports units*

1. Introduction

Representing a way of thinking and acting on the market sphere, the marketing realizes a systemic action of the activities flow which bind the production to the consummation, constituting – more than various specific methods and techniques – the domain of a young science in the field of the scientific leading theory of the socio-economical phenomena and processes.

The term of marketing is of Anglo-Saxon origin (representing the present participle of the verb „to market", which means buying and selling, realizing market transactions). Its origins are localized, at the beginning of the XX century, in the United States of America: in 1902, in the Bulletin of the University of Michigan, during the introduction of a university course concerning the products distribution there was used the expression of "different marketing methods of goods". Gradually, this term became international.

In the last years, the marketing was more and more frequent in two sectors, as culture and sport, which presented various similitudes from the point of view of the labour conscription realization and of the consummation. This presence manifests itself through the utilization more and more frequent of the market research techniques, the development of a marketing activities (especially promotional ones), the constitution of marketing nucleus in the organizational structures of cultural and sportive institutions, etc.(Niţă M.A., 1999-2000)

Marketing is a modern science, of actuality, perfectly adaptable to answer through practical action, to demands of superior accomplishment of individual or group necessities and wishes and, of economical efficiency criteria. (Cetină I., 2001).

2. Marketing in sports facilities

Many people think that they know what marketing is and with what marketing specialists deal. In their conception, marketing became synonymous to the methods used by enterprises to attract clients and to convince them to buy their products and/or their services.

The marketing department from a sports unit is considered as responsible for the new products presentation, for the apparition of favorable press articles, for the realization of market studies and for the rending of support arguments for those who deal with sales.

One expects from marketing people to collaborate with the advertising agencies, to analyze and solve clients complaints, to establish criteria and help them choosing the new products and to organize their promotion campaigns etc. Such an opinion reveals the fact that the main function of marketing would be the presentation of the sportive unity and of its products to some potential clients.

Such a demarche concerning marketing is insufficient. The organizations which consider that the marketing department represents just a vehicle towards the clients, prove that they didn't understand the essence and task of the marketing.

Marketing is a higher extension and a complexity with many meanings. According to Professor C. Florescu, „marketing represents a modern conception in sportive unity orientation, concretized in a coherent ensemble of practical activities, scheduled and organized through using some methods and scientific techniques."

The definition has three main elements: modern conception, a practical activity and scientific methods and techniques. Only by analyzing them together, these three elements explain the concrete content of the market. So:

- *The modern conception* refers to a new topic in the development and organization of the economical activity of sportive unities, which has as starting point the research of the consummation needs, of the market, for satisfying the effective and potential demands of the consumers (users), in a superior way and with maximum efficiency. In addition, finalizing the activities of the sporting unities doesn't restrict itself to products and services sale, but it also includes the pursuit of their use during consummation, the level of satisfying the needs for which they were conceived and produced.

The marketing optics concerns the reports of sportive unities with the market, with the ensemble of factors and conditions which compose the "circumambience" of the sportive unities. The consumer is the centre of the attention of the market and not the producer. (Stanciu S.,2002)

- *Practical activities* specific to marketing can be concretized in:
  - the investigation of the market and of the consumption;
  - testing the products acceptability on the market;
  - promotional activities;
  - chasing the consumption products etc.

-*Scientific methods and techniques* regard the collecting, the transmission, the processing and the interpretation of the information necessary to take the marketing decisions.

Speaking about the marketing concept three main characteristics should be taken into account by each organization which pretends to be directed towards the market: orientation towards the client, the integrated effort and the purposes focalization.

The orientation towards the client. It can be found if sportive unities are focused on their clients' needs.

In many cases, sportive unities are focused on production and afferent technological processes, not being able to understand that clients' needs modified and that their products don't correspond to their needs. During such situations there is created the opportunity for the competition to enter the market and to offer products and services which satisfy better those needs, the sportive unities facing some difficulties selling the products.

The integrated effort. This principle supposes that different departments from the same sportive unity had to work together for satisfying the client; the whole company should have a marketing orientation, and not only the specific department.

The purposes focalization. Every sportive unity must conclude businesses only with clients which help it to achieve its own aims. These purposes have in common a higher profit, even if some organizations such as charity organizations, health services, local authorities, educational or art institutions may have a variety of purposes. One of the problems in which the unities get trapped is that of selling by all means, and the profit is situated in a secondary place.

At present, the marketing disposes of a specific instrument of research and specific terminology, using informatics applications in domains like: merchandise distribution, electronic payments, processing the information of marketing and their transmission at high distance. (Wilkinson. D., 1990)

Its interdisciplinary character is a successful combination between the quantitative and qualitative study of the phenomena and processes which happen on the market, using adequate methods, techniques and instruments. At present, marketing disposes of many methods starting with the rigid scientific ones, which are completed by the heuristic ones, and ending with the sociological, psychological and socio-psychological instruments. (Mihailescu.N , 2006)

The marketing researches assure the necessary informational support in all the stages of the decisional process. In essence, the market research is nothing but the research of every aspect concerning the marketing activity.

They represent the activities through which (with the help of some methods, concepts and scientific techniques of investigation) they realize the specification, the measurement, the collection and the analysis and the interpretation of marketing information (fated to the leadership of the sportive unity) for the knowledge of the medium in which they act, for identifying the opportunities and the eventual threats, for evaluating the alternative actions of the marketing and of their effects.

The research aria is extremely expansive, concerning especially the environment in which the association develops its activity:

- The inner environment of the sportive unity must concern the resources of which the enterprise disposes (material resources, financial, human, etc.) and the capacity of mobilization of these resources, of their accommodation to the objectives which the enterprise proposes to itself.
- The macro environment in which the sportive unity develops its activity: the economical environment, the demographical one, the natural one and the political one, etc.;
- The investigation of consumption needs;
- The study of purchase and consumption behavior;
- Investigations intended to direct the marketing politics;
- Analyses and previsions on a short, medium and long term, necessary to thesubstantiation of programs and of all the marketing activities, such as the evaluation of the performances from this domain.

The marketing role is that of obtaining the information necessary to the marketing decision.

The continuous rise of the market phenomena, the accelerate dynamics of the events in the environment lead to a continuous rise of the needs of marketing information of the sportive association concerning the national economical environment. The quality of the decisions whish precede the action, the results of the sportive association and respectively its profitableness depend on the quality of the obtained information.

The contribution of the marketing information at the decreasing of the entropy of an economical organism, in this case the sportive association, realizes on one hand through external informational fluxes: environment- sportive association –environment, and on the other hand through the inner informational; fluxes, which circulate on a vertical and horizontal plan between the various departments of the sportive association..(Mullin B.J.,1993)

The research of the marketing communication follows the efficiency of different mass – media advertising supports, the correlated study of the price politics, the distribution and the own promoting and the competitive, motivational study etc.

3. The sports marketing plan

The definition of the strategies of the product, price, distribution, promoting is followed by the elaboration of the tactical programs of the product planning and development, of the promoting programs and sales programs (volume, price, space and time), adapted according to the criteria of mix-marketing in the marketing plan of the sportive association.(Kotler Ph.,Armstrong G., 1970)

The elaboration of the mix-marketing plan supposes the active influence of the environment by the sportive association. This influence is realized through the second side of the external informational fluxes (sportive association -environment), concretized in the construction of the enterprise image, the product image, through the creation of the market in the case of new products from the point of view of the client. At the stage, the informational circuit is resumed through the marketing research which realizes the end of the feed-back lock.

This circulation of information should be analyzed according its perpetual movement environment – sportive association – environment, in order to emit the general characteristics of the ensemble functioning. Localizing the analysis in this last stage of the information circuit,"the influence over the environment", one can distinguish three main channels of communication between the producer and the consumer: through product, sale and advertising.

Using sports to sell products presents many opportunities that bring both risk and reward. A successful sports marketing campaign can linger in the minds of consumers for years, while an ineffective one can be a significant waste of money. All marketing efforts must be guided by a comprehensive marketing plan if they hope to succeed.

The plan will begin with a number of logistical questions, such as budget estimations and resources. Sports marketing can get expensive quickly and the companies will need to use their resources wisely. They will also need to establish a time frame for the campaign (it will run for a week, an entire season, or involve a multi-year marketing effort like buying stadium naming rights). Different marketing objectives will involve different plans.

The company then needs to know who their target audience is and how they can best be reached. This involves analyzing the company, their product, and the customer. If a marketer wants to reach males under 35 they might focus on extreme sports. If they want to reach a casual sports fan, they might focus their efforts on the Olympics. The marketer will need to examine the entire sports marketing landscape and identify the most promising opportunities based on scientifically based market research.

A team of creative professionals will work on developing ads whether they are TV spots, billboards, or radio ads. Research findings should determine the goals of the advertisements, but ad makers will develop the content that they think can best speak to the target audience. They will use team colors, slogans, and sports imagery to create a link between the product and the sport.

Once the ad campaign begins, the company will need to evaluate how effective it is. Metrics like increased sales, people watching social media sites, and brand awareness are all indicators of how well a campaign is being received. The metrics should reflect the goals established in the marketing plan. If the goals are being met, the campaign can be continued and built upon. If the number falls short, the marketing strategy will have to be revised.

4. Conclusions

The basic pills of the marketing are the orientation towards the client, the marketing integration in the association activity and the accent on the profit.

Every definition of the marketing, regardless of the school to which it belongs, should contain some basic concepts: needs, wishes and demands; products; value, satisfaction and quality.

Sports marketing uses sports, in any form, to help sell goods and services. This particular style of marketing is less about using a single strategy and more about using the content of sports to assist marketing efforts. This is not limited to professional sports, and may include college athletics, minor leagues, or alternative sports.

Since sports can be watched on a variety of platforms, sports marketing can take many different forms. Teams sell advertising space inside their stadiums to marketers who want to purchase billboards and other print ads, while TV networks sell airtime during the events. Famous athletes also sign contracts to work as celebrity endorsers and lend their images to marketers.

The biggest advantage of sports marketing is that it allows marketers to piggyback on the popularity and devotion many fans feel towards their favorite teams and athletes. If a football fan has loved a specific team since childhood, any marketer who associates themselves with that team gains instant credibility in that fan's mind. Since the revenue ultimately goes to support the team, the marketer is considered a sponsor and invested in the team's success.

The only major disadvantage is that the sports marketing industry is so large that it can be hard to stand out in the crowd. A fan who watches a three hour football game will be exposed to dozens of different marketing messages. Marketers must advertise to a wide range of customers, but risk that their ad gets overlooked by fans more interested in the game.

Taking out an advertisement during the radio broadcast of a football game can be easy and relatively inexpensive strategies. It is only very large companies that will be able to invest heavily in sports marketing though. Securing celebrity endorsers and buying TV airspace during major sporting events can cost tens of millions of dollars.

Marketers use sports to reach a certain segment of the population. Typically, the target market is men, but there are exceptions. Figure skating, for instance, attracts a large female audience. Products that appeal to men like beer, trucks, and snack foods are marketed heavily during sporting events for this reason. The only real qualification for using sports marketing is having a product with a wide appeal. The maker of highly specific business software would gain nothing from the wide net cast by sports marketing.

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