

SPORTs MARKETING: AN OVERVIEW

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❖ INTRODUCTION

One of the most profitable industries today is the sports industry. Major sports like cricket, football, tennis, as well as the country-specific favorites like baseball, American football, rugby and so on are followed by people all over the world. People are willing to spend money on going to watch sporting events and they are also willing to spend money on products because of sports. Products endorsed by athletes, like products endorsed by actors, appeal to a wide consumer base. Advertising products during televised sporting events is a tried-and-true marketing technique. It is especially prevalent for brands to promote products which are linked to sports and athletics by having them endorsed by athletes and sports teams. Athletes are celebrities and a pair of sneakers endorsed by someone who is famous because of their physical prowess is very successful with consumers. It is also common for organizations which are sponsoring a major sporting event to have the competitors promote their products. Sponsors also advertise their products in the arena where the sporting event is taking place.

Sporting events, sports teams, and athletes are also promoted to the general public. Major events like the Olympics or the FIFA World Cup are advertised and promoted on multiple platforms to ensure viewers for the events. Sports are also promoted to people in order to raise interest and participation in that particular sport by members of the populace. In order for the sports industry to be sustainable, there must be new athletes coming into the field periodically. This is especially significant because athletes have a shelf-life. This is also connected to associations wanting to promote their sport and governmental bodies raising public health awareness.

❖ OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To show the impact of marketing trends on sports
- ✓ To throw the light on the challenges before sports advertiser

❖ THREE TYPES OF SPORTING MARKETING

1) Marketing of Sports

Marketing of sports is the promotion of sports, sporting events, sporting associations and sports teams. This kind of promotion is directly concerned with sports. It is defined as developing or designing a “live” activity which has a particular theme.

The purpose of this is to exhibit or advertise events, teams, and associations. Events like the Olympics or the Superbowl are examples of the idea. The NFL, which organizes the Superbowl, seeks to promote the Superbowl itself, as well as American football in general and the different competing teams. So this sector deals with advertising sports to the viewing public

2) Marketing through Sports

Marketing through sports is concerned with the promotion of different goods, services or causes by piggybacking on the popularity of sports and athletes. This is the sector that deals with athletes and sports teams endorsing different products, as well as the use of sporting events by sponsors to advertise their products to the viewers. This is where different platforms of advertisement are utilized with a particular focus on promoting a product. This kind of marketing can be the responsibility of the sports associations or the sports clubs. Other than sponsorship and endorsement, there is also the sale of licensed merchandise, events where athletes interact with their fans and so on.

3) Grassroots Sports Marketing

Grassroots sports marketing is concerned with promoting sports to the general populace. This is done with a view to increasing the popularity of a sport not as entertainment but as exercise. The target is to increase participation in the sport. This is social marketing because it is of benefit to the public. It is usually carried out by sports associations that wish to increase interest in their sport and governmental bodies and charitable organizations that seek to increase participation from youths and also to lower the cost of healthcare by promoting activity.

❖ THE USES OF SPORTING MARKETING



Sports marketing are very useful in multiple ways, mostly in conjunction with how the popularity of sports can be used by the business industry and used to promote sports in return.

- **Brand recognition:** Sporting events are very widely and repeatedly viewed. By advertising their products in the stadium and during the telecast of events, companies can ensure that viewers will be constantly and consistently exposed to their products. By having popular athletes and sports teams promote their products, organizations can leverage the faith of the fans of those athletes and teams. Basically, if the consumer's favorite athlete or team endorses a brand, the consumer puts their trust in the brand because of the endorsement. Many brands even become permanently linked to a particular event, athlete or team, and the public associates the two and trusts the brand because of it.
- **Promoting new products:** By having an athlete or team endorse a **new product**, organizations can market the product more easily. While people would be reluctant to put their faith in a new good or service that they do not have first-hand knowledge of, having sports celebrities promote the product makes use of the status of the **celebrity** to raise public faith and interest in the product. This is a marketing technique that is especially useful for sportswear and health food. A testimonial from a sportsperson makes these products more trustworthy.
- **Raising viewership and revenue:** Promoting sporting events and associations, as well as teams across a variety of platforms like print media, television, social media, and billboards ensures that there will be widespread interest in those events, associations, and teams. Revenue will increase along with interest as people watch the events both in person and at home and decide to follow those teams and the sports of those associations. The sports industry **needs** followers of sports as well as players. Without any outside interest in sports, the industry would suffer monetary loss. Promoting sports leads to people who are not actually players becoming invested in the sport, which is good for the industry and the sport itself.
- **Public service:** Sports marketing can be used to serve the needs of the public. Athletes promote charitable causes and because of their celebrity status, can raise aid for those in need easily. The government can promote sports to at-risk youth and by subsidizing their participation, can raise participation in the sport as well as provide the youth with an avenue to income. Promoting sports to raise public awareness about personal health is another use of sports marketing. The general public is encouraged to participate in sports and thus engage in an active **lifestyle**.

❖ THE ADVANTAGES OF SPORTING MARKETING

Sports marketing is advantageous for athletes, teams, and associations as well as companies that sponsor and promote sports.

Advantages for the sportspersons : Athletes, teams, and associations enjoy direct revenue from endorsement deals. Being the face of a brand makes them more accessible to people who do not follow sports. This can lead to said people beginning to follow sports for the sake of this athlete or team, in turn, increase revenue from ticket sales and the like for the athlete or team. Sports marketing raising interest in a sport in general benefits everybody associated with that sport. They also benefit from the media rights that come with promoting sports.

Advantages for sponsors : Business organizations benefit from sponsoring sporting teams and events because they receive revenue from it. Additionally, they can use the event or team to endorse their products in return. Followers of sports or fans of a particular team will see the endorsement and take an interest in the products. Using the endorsement of a celebrity athlete is a definite way of ensuring increased sales and profit. By entering into deals with sports associations sponsors can promote major events and associate themselves with the event, which benefits them in the long run.

Advantages for viewers : Viewers of sports gain awareness of different sports and sporting events through sports marketing. Sports marketing gives fans the opportunity to interact with their idol athletes through promotional events. It also focuses on raising participation in sports among viewers. Fans can become athletes themselves if the marketing strategies are employed correctly. Sports marketing meets the needs of consumers by the means of exchange processes.

Advantages for venue locale : The cities and countries which host major sporting events benefit greatly as a result of sports marketing. The event is often advertised with an emphasis on the country or city which is hosting it, such as the Olympics. The city or country receives direct revenue because of taxes. Additionally, a major sporting event such as a World Cup leads to a surge in tourism. Fans of the sport or a particular team or athlete often travel to this particular locale in order to view the event in person. If the event is promoted then it ensures revenue from the tourism industry.

❖ **THE DISADVANTAGES OF SPORTING MARKETING**

There are disadvantages to sports marketing as well.

These include excessive power in the hands of businesses, oversaturation of brands and so on.

Lack of uniqueness : There are a vast number of brands in the sports industry. The viewers are exposed to a very large quantity of advertisements for different products in the course of following a sport. If the brand fails to stand out to a sufficient degree then it will be lost in a sea of competitors. The viewer of a televised event might also be too invested in the match to pay attention to advertisements.

The behaviour of athletes : While athletes are very good for endorsing products, any action on the part of the athlete that fails to live up to standards of expectation will have a negative impact. An athlete who has committed a crime or has been caught using steroids will lose the trust of their fans. As a result, any brand endorsed by them will suffer.

Commercialisation : Marketing through sports may lead to the marketing of goods and services through the use of sports overshadowing the actual sport. This leads to businesses gaining too much power over sports teams or athletes. Monetary gain becomes the primary focus and the sport itself suffers. There is a loss of integrity. The final say belongs to big corporations.

Reasons behind underdevelopment of sports in India are –

1. Corruption & Mismanagement of sports authorities: Corruption has become synonymous with sports administration in India. Whether it is the most popular cricket or hockey or weightlifting, most of the sports authorities in India have come under attack due to corruption charges. Besides, the involvement of politicians in the administration of sports bodies for a very long period and controversies surrounding 2010 Commonwealth Games dented the image of sports administrators in India.

2. Social and economic inequalities: Social and economic inequalities have a negative impact on the Indian sport. Denial of access to sports infrastructure due to poverty, concentration of stadiums and other sports avenues only in cities, lack of encouragement to girls to participate in sports, etc, have impaired the development of a positive sports culture in the country.

3. Lack of infrastructure: This is one of the most important factors for the apathy of the sport in India. Since infrastructure is necessary for training and organizing games, its non-availability and its access to only a few sections of the society have adversely impacted the sport participation and the quality of sports persons.

4. Policy lacunae: For the development of any sector, formulation and execution of an effective policy is a sine qua non. This is true for sports also. Till date, the sports policy planning and implementation is centralized in the country due to the paucity of resources and the expertise by the State and local governments. Moreover, the absence of a separate ministry of sports at the union level reflects the apathy towards sports.

5. Meagre allocation of resources: Compared to other developed and developing countries, allocation of financial resources is meager in India. In the Union Budget 2017-18, Rs 1943 crore allocated for sports. While it is Rs 450 crore higher than the previous year, it is much below than the around Rs 9000 crore spent annually by the UK for the sports sector.

❖ CONCLUSION

To conclude, with the right idea and execution, sports marketing can help a brand get onto another level and gain recognition. Knowing exactly what the fans want and how their products or services can help the fans will certainly go a long way than just spending money and pray that people will be attracted to the brand. Marketing to sports fans is a greater challenge than it seems. It takes a versatile set of skills on the part of the marketer to target a range of demographics through a variety of advertising channels. They face tough competition from rival companies, and an audience that is more interested in the game than the ads. The best way for marketers to prepare themselves for these and other sports marketing challenges is to train in a sports marketing program. There are currently over 100 sports marketing programs offered in the country. These programs focus specifically on the tactics of sports marketing and offer students access to athletes, broadcasters,

and marketing professionals. Most programs also include an internship component that connects students with real world sports marketing companies.
