

## 2012 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2012)

### Internal Marketing in Intercollegiate Athletics Departments: Maximizing Effectiveness Across Job Types

*Michael Martinez, Troy University*

*Jeffrey Stinson, Central Washington University*

*Anthony W. Dixon, Troy University*

**Management/leadership**

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**20-minute oral presentation  
(including questions)**

**Abstract 2012-255**

**8:55 AM**

**(Salon C)**

Internal marketing is “the application of marketing, human resource management, and allied theories, techniques and principals to motivate, mobilize, co-opt, and manage employees at all levels of the organization to continuously improve the way they serve external customers and each other” (Joseph, 1996). While there are several decades of research considering the positive outcomes associated with an external market orientation (e.g., Jaworski & Kohli, 1993), only more recently has research considered the important role of an internal market orientation as a pre- or co-requisite to effective external market orientation (e.g., Lings, 2004). Research on internal marketing in the intercollegiate athletics context is sparse. One recent study identified a positive relationship between employee perceptions of internal marketing and affective commitment to the organization (Martinez, Stinson, & Jubenville, 2011). The authors further reported post hoc analyses indicating that employees with different job functions reported different perceptions of internal marketing and different levels of affective commitment toward the organization. The current study seeks to build upon these analyses to explore whether different components of internal marketing are more important to employees with different sets of job responsibilities. Theoretically, the results of the current study will contribute to a refined understanding of how internal marketing practices should be geared to different types of employees to maximize outcomes. In practice, the results can be used to segment internal audiences to better meet employee’s needs through internal marketing programs.

Internal marketing is comprised of three constructs: development, rewards, and vision (Money & Foreman, 1996). Development includes activities involving employee training and skill development. Rewards refer to activities designed to value and recognize employees for superior performance; and, vision incorporates the communication of organization values, purpose and direction. Previous research has most commonly examined internal marketing as a summated scale of the three constructs (e.g., Caruana & Calleya, 1998; Martinez, Stinson & Jubenville, 2011). However, it stands to reason that employees with different job responsibilities may respond more strongly and favorably to different combinations of development, rewards, and vision. Bennett and Barkensjo (2005) hypothesized that different job attributes, including teamwork, autonomy and supervisory support, would affect the results of internal marketing programs. As noted above, Martinez et al. (2011) reported post hoc analyses that intercollegiate athletic employees with different sets of job responsibilities reported different perceptions of internal marketing programs. Thus, the current study seeks to answer the research question: Are different types of internal marketing (i.e., different sets of vision, development and rewards) more effective for different job types/function in the intercollegiate athletics department?

Data for this study were collected from a survey of (n=248) athletic department employees from 64 NCAA Division I colleges and universities. The survey instrument included the items for vision, development and rewards (Money and Foreman, 1996) along with a variety of demographic and job-related variables. For purposes of analysis, employees were divided into four groups based on job responsibilities; administration, external relations, internal relations, and student-athlete development.

Validity of the internal marketing scale was conducted through confirmatory factor analysis to determine the overall fit of the data. CFA on the internal marketing scale resulted in a reasonable fit, with four of the indexes surpassing the cutoff values ( $\chi^2 = 241.85$  (df = 85),  $p < 0.000$ ; NFI = 0.92; CFI = 0.94; SRMR = 0.04). The root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA = 0.08) indicated moderate fit. One-way ANOVA was used to test for mean differences in vision, reward and development among the four job function categories. Results suggest that significant group mean differences existed for both development,  $F(3, 230) = 3.667$ ,  $p = .013$ , and for reward,  $F(3, 230) = 3.667$ ,  $p = .002$ . Group mean differences for vision,  $F(3, 230) = 2.203$ ,  $p = .089$ , was not significant.

LSD post-hoc comparisons of the four groups for development suggest that administration ( $M = 5.29$ , 95% CI [4.89, 5.69]) and internal function ( $M = 5.06$ , 95% CI [4.71, 5.42]) both perceived development to be significantly higher

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than the student-athlete function ( $M = 4.54$ , 95% CI [4.24, 4.84]). Additionally, post-hoc comparisons for reward suggest that administration ( $M = 4.94$ , 95% CI [4.56, 5.34]) viewed reward as significantly more important than both the external function ( $M = 4.15$ , 95% CI [3.80, 4.50]) and the student-athlete function ( $M = 3.95$ , 95% CI [3.61, 4.30]), while the internal function ( $M = 4.45$ , 95% CI [4.07, 4.83]) also saw reward as more important than the student-athlete function.

One of the primary implications of these findings suggests that athletic administrators place a higher emphasis on reward than do the external relations and student-athlete functions. Essentially, those in the external relations function (development, marketing, and media relations) and the student-athlete function (coaches, student-support) do not necessarily perceive the recognition of their work to be as strong as those in the administrative capacities. The analysis suggests that athletic administrators believe they are doing a good job promoting vision, development and reward. However, other job functions do not have the same perception of internal marketing. Athletic administrators need to allow for other job areas to provide feedback on internal marketing so modifications can be made to the program. Considering external marketing, decision makers obtain feedback from their publics in order to modify their external marketing strategies. Similarly, athletic administrators should obtain input about their internal marketing program from various staff within their departments through a proposed "feedback loop", using the results to make necessary adjustments and increase the potential for successful internal marketing programs.